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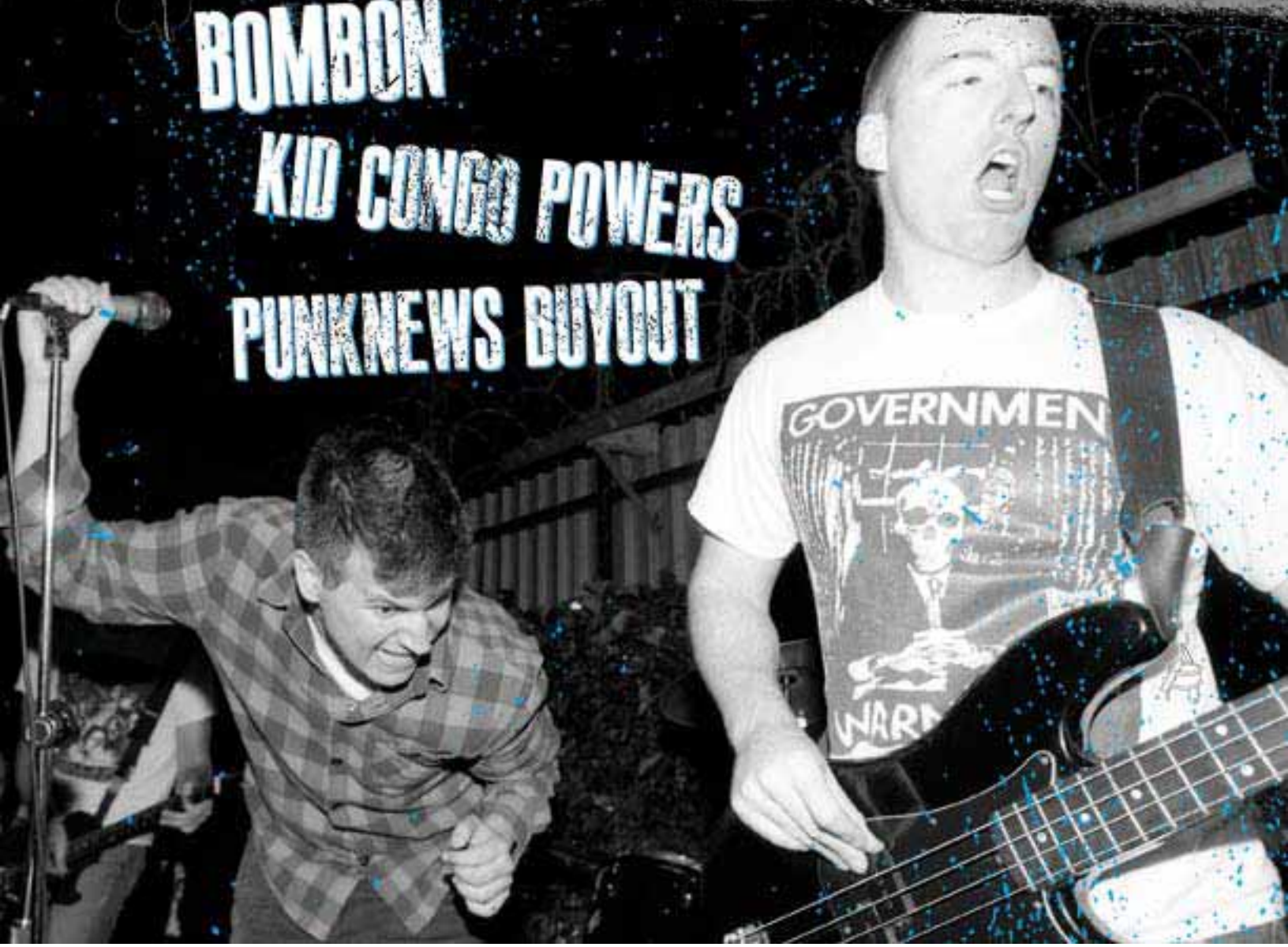
#71 \$4 US

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TEN NEW REASONS TO

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As many of you probably already know, *Razorcake* is a bonafide non-profit music magazine dedicated to supporting independent music culture. All donations, subscriptions, and orders directly from us—regardless of amount—have been essential components to our continued survival.

Our challenge is to expand Razorcake while maintaining our high standards.

One of our most pertinent concerns is to continue to keep the price of subscriptions and advertising as affordable as possible. It is crucial that we remain accessible to people of modest income. The challenge is we also need revenue to grow our projects. Hopefully with the money we receive via donations we can cover those costs.

It's a lot of fucking work! Now, more than ever, we depend on charitable donations and reader subscriptions.

Help us thrive—donate and subscribe!

You can donate through our site:
At www.razorcake.org, click on the "Donate" button on the left-hand side of the homepage.

If you want to send us a donation directly through paypal, our address is payments@razorcake.org

We also are happy to receive checks sent to PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042

To sweeten the deal, till December 31st, 2012 we're offering an incentive to donate any extra cash you might have lying around.

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For \$1,000,000, you will receive a **handmade koozie tuxedo** made with love by the RC staff out of koozies donated from their personal collections. Plus a 6-issue First Class subscription, and donation-only sticker.

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That's the Difference

I thought it was abundantly clear through example over the past eleven years, from its core construction as a non-profit 501(c)(3) to its bedrock of a vast volunteer network, Razorcake is fundamentally different than most collaborative, DIY punk enterprises. As the co-founder and executive director of Razorcake, even if a project goes gangbusters—a record sells incredibly well, subscriptions spike, a Gorsky book becomes a bestseller—all of that money goes back into Razorcake's core mission, not my back pocket or a purple metal flake jet ski. The paperwork is daunting and unfun, but the resulting financial transparency matches our ethics and rhetoric.

I personally think the "royal, unapologetic asshole" personality in punk is played out. It's a zero-sum game that's self-fulfilling and solipsistic. It's self-loathing flipped inside out. I'm more interested in building than tearing down and I warn this: although Razorcake's culture is not one of attack or institutional assholeishness, don't mistake kindness for weakness. We'll call bullshit out, and not in an "I'm unfriending you," drama-troll message board way. We dismantle the watch down to its moving parts, to see how it ticks and shine a light on its inner workings, not solely its face.

Any subculture can be co-opted if it can be milked for money or status. DIY punk—as a musical genre and movement—is no different. It has very little to do with aesthetics. Every punk signpost—mohawks, middle fingers, fast songs, aggravated fonts, anger—has been bought and sold so many times that if this stuff really was only skin deep, it would've been over and buried by 1978. Inside Razorcake, DIY punk is a spirit, not a ghost or an ATM machine.

DIY punk is something—if you believe and put the time in it—you can exert complete control. It can be more autonomous than anything else in your life. It is worth fighting for.

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ISSUE #72

Dec. 1st, 2012

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Cover design by Keith Rosson
Cover photo by Matt Average

"But now even the people I love are acting like fucking robots / Forget now what you heard in your youth / And I can't wait 'til you wake up and face the truth / Let's go."

Tiltwheel, "Teach Your Children Hell"

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Mark C. Shaw. Miss you, buddy.



We laugh. We nap.

photo by DayIn Luedtke

This being 2012 and much of the world being on the internet, our old analog protections against "major labels can suck it" have to be recalibrated. That's where the Punknews series of articles in this issue comes in. Punknews is a purely online enterprise. It adopted the dogma of DIY punk. It talked the talk of community and collaboration for over a decade before quietly backing out of the room with its sale to Buzz Media. Punknews' sole owner Aubin Paul enriched himself for an undisclosed sum of money from uncountable hours of free labor. Months after the buyout, Paul has yet to publicly address financial details of the deal, methodically disconnecting all of his electronic tethers—his Twitter account, his direct contributor link on Punknews—and remaining stoic. If he's not guilty, he's surely acting it. Yesteryear's scumbag music distributors are being replaced by opportunistic websites poaching punk. Hooray.

That's where Razorcake comes in. We believe in and are ultimately responsible for something larger than ourselves. We are the sum of a lightning ball of volunteers, contributors, socially-awkward dingdongs, subscribers, fuckups, gracious donors, IT geeks, weirdoes, and worldwide DIY punks. Here are 112 pages of bi-monthly proof, real as anything, right in your hands.

You've got my word. Razorcake will never suck up or sell out to a larger popular culture that shits in our eyes and ears while sustaining its industry by making us feel inferior.

Razorcake's main currency remains the integrity we've built over the past decade. We believe that there's got to be a better way. We believe that these cycles of exploitation can be broken. We believe that, together, we can rise above. With this in mind, if you are of the means, please consider a tax-deductible donation to Razorcake. We have some ridiculous year-end incentives.

Thanks for the support.

—Todd Taylor

THANK YOU: THANK YOU: When the roar of a band washes everything else away—job problems, life problems, addiction problems, relationship problems—that's one hell of a measure of a band's power thanks to both Keith Rosson and Matt Average for giving the Night Birds their due on the cover; Well, that's depressing, but real, thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Respects paid thanks to Craig Horky for his illo. in Jim's column; At first, I thought, "Uh oh, we can't have spousal abuse," then I realized it was Keith Richards. Phew. Thanks to Jackie Rusted for her illo. in Dale's column; Furby fascination and upside down funnel of curls thanks to Alex Barrett for his illo. in Norb's column; What's next? Stripper thongs at funerals? thanks to Nation of Amanda for her illo. in Gary's column; I'm calling animal abuse on the Chickenhead thanks to Chloe Clayton for her photo in the Rhythm Chicken's column; Gettin' hyphy and izzle developmental thanks to Pantsless Bill Pinkel for his illo. in Nardwuar's column; Adding to my favorite-sounding Spanish words albondigas and manteca de cacahuete, I'm adding Bombon, thanks to Adrian "I sound like I'm on downers" Tenny and Ever "I'm getting my bow and belt next week" Velasquez, Shanty Cheryl, and Andrew Wagher for all of their interview help; In The Cramps? Check. In The Gun Club? Check. In Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds? Check. Thanks to Ryan Leach, Matt Average, Larry Hardy, and Keith Rosson for the Kid Congo Powers interview; Ca-caw! Motherfucker Ca-Caw! thanks to Matt Average, Keith Rosson, Sean Arenas, and Matthew Hart for the Night Birds interview help; Dammit. I really thought I came up with a new word. Advertainment "is a portmanteau of the words advertising and entertainment. It was first used in 1999 by Patrizia Musso, an Italian professor of brand communication." Thanks to Dan Ozzi, Sean Carswell, Kevin Dunn, Marcos Siref, Candice Tobin, Joe Dana, and El Diablo for all of their help with the Punknews buyout articles; Welcome to the coal mine of DIY punk music culture. This is where the ore gets regarded for quality, heat, and purity thanks to the following who reviewed music, zines, and books: Megan Pants, Ryan Leach, Andrew Wagher, Lauren Trout, Rich Cocksedge, Craven Rock, Ryan Horky, Keith Rosson, Chris Mason, Matthew Hart, Dave Williams, Sal Lucci, Mike Frame, Designated Dale, Donofthead, Adrian Salas, Billups Allen, Juan Espinosa, Chris Terry, MP Johnson, Kristen K, Matt Average, Kurt Morris, Ian Wise, Mark Twistworthy, Bryan Static, Nighthawk, Sean Koepenick, Ty Stranglehold, Joe Evans III, Paul J. Comeau, Norb, Tim Brooks, Jimmy Alvarado, Jim Woster, Sean Carswell, Dave Brainwreck, Katie Dunne, and James Meier; The following people hands-on helped us out in the past two months. We never take it for granted thanks to Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Robert El Diablo, Malcolm McLaren, Chris Baxter, Mary-Clare Stevens, Andrew Wagher Alex Martinez, Marcos Siref, PJ Fancher, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Juan Espinosa, Aaron Kovacs, Nicole Macias, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, George Lopez, Rene Navarro, Donna Ramone, Tim Burkett, Jeff Proctor, Nighthawk, Josh Rosa, Toby Tober, Marty Ploy, Sal Lucci, Jennifer Federico, Johnny Volume, Katie Hornberger, Adrian Chi, Stacy Medina, Ronnie Sullivan, Garrett Barnwell, Adrian Salas, Kristen K, Katie Dunne, Sean Arenas, Matthew Hart, and Ashley Ravelo.

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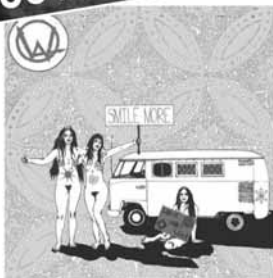
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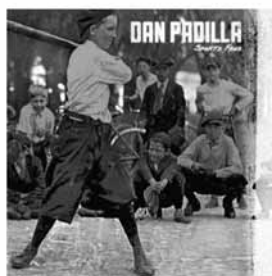
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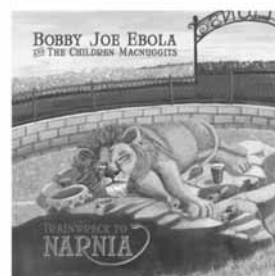
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Marked Men - On the Outside tape

Marked Men - S/T tape

Crusades - The Sun is Down and

the Night is Riding In tape

RAZORCAKE

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WE DO OUR PART

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"Isn't it good?" | "It's somewhat cheap." | "Oh." She nodded. | "Will you tell me which ones are cheap?" | "Gladly; that's half the fun. Anybody can enjoy music; it's disliking it that takes training." —Philip K. Dick, *Mary and the Giant*



Moving? Have a subscription to Razorcake? Please do us both a favor and contact us before you move. Bulk mail doesn't forward and we won't resend the issue.

Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky Press, Inc.



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A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**“Wrestling
inspiration
from the jaws
of futility.”**

Down in the Dump

The smell of a county dump brings back memories of my youth. All the time I spent there. All the times I swore I'd never return.

I'm at the dump on the sad mission to throw away several thousand books. I'd like to keep them. I'd like to put them in the hands of people who'd read them. Books are sacred to me. I spend hours every day with books—reading them, writing them, publishing them, teaching them, and so on. Bringing a truck full of books to the dump is pulverizing.

Memories of my youth make it all the more complicated. Before I can talk about the books, I have to talk about dumps.

I grew up working construction. I usually phrase it like that. I “worked construction.” There's a nice vagueness to it. It only suggests that I was on a job site doing something that someone was willing to pay me to do. I like to talk about my first day of working construction, too. I was thirteen years old. My dad was overseeing a remodel. He needed someone to run a jackhammer on an old slab. I became that someone. For eight hours, I jackhammered a slab into rubble.

I like to tell that story because it gives a false impression of what I did when I worked construction. Running a jackhammer sounds tough and masculine. And who knows? Maybe my love of punk rock came from the songs I sang to myself to the beat of the jackhammer that day.

The whole truth, though, is that I was also responsible for the rubble after I'd finished with the slab. It's not like I just broke up the slab, and the job was done. I still had to pick up all the broken concrete, load it into a trailer and the back of a truck, ride out to the dump, and unload the truck and trailer. And this is what I did mostly on job sites when I was a kid. I picked up trash, loaded it into a truck and a trailer, rode out to the dump, and unloaded it. I worked as the trash man. It may seem like the lowest job in the construction site hierarchy, but keep in mind that I was only thirteen when I started. This meant that, for a few years, I was too young to drive a truck and a trailer myself. I had to work with people who were old enough to drive, which meant I wasn't even the trash man initially. I was his assistant. That, my humble readers, is the lowest job on the construction site.

The benefit of being a trash man (or his assistant) was that I could always pick up extra money during after school hours and on

weekends. It was the only job I could do on sites during that time. So I got to know the smell of the dump well. Dump mud caked my shoes and ground into the floorboards of my truck. Dump dust drifted into my nose and settled in my lungs. It floated back out with every exhale, a steady reminder of my day's labor. I became so accustomed to the smell of the dump that I had no problem eating my lunch on the way into and out of the dump. I took my place among the bottom feeders who felt right at home among all this trash.

When people called me white trash back then—which happened more than I like to remember—it was an insult with many layers. It was hard not to internalize that shit when the dirt of the dump was a part of me.

As I got older, I learned a trade. I worked for framing carpenters until I became skilled in the trade myself, at which point I quit hauling trash. Somewhere just before my twenty-second birthday, I swore to myself that I'd never set foot into a dump again. I only broke that promise twice.

The first time was when a friend's mom died. I helped him haul off everything of hers that he couldn't sell or keep. It was a sad day. It was sadder for him than for me. For me, everything we hauled looked like trash. For him, it carried the ghost of his mom. At some point in her life, she'd thought to purchase all that stuff. She'd surrounded herself with it. Like we're all taught to do in this consumer society, she found meaning in the shit she accumulated around her. And now all that meaning was going to be ground into the dirt of West Cocoa, turned into a form of dirt itself under the spiked tires of heavy equipment.

And now I'm at the dump again, and this time the sad mission is all my doing. The bed of my truck is full of excess books. There are only seven or eight titles, but there are hundreds of copies of each. They've been a problem of mine for years. I blame the chain store Borders even though I know a lot of it is my fault.

Several years ago, Gorsky Press signed on with a book distributor in Los Angeles. The distributor did a good job of getting our books into stores. They got the attention of one of the buyers at Borders, who, for some reason, really liked Gorsky books. The buyer started taking about a thousand copies of every new title we published. We started printing an extra thousand copies to accommodate this.

I should've been suspicious. I'd run distro at Razorcake. I knew the danger of dancing with these big box stores. I'd known what it was like to send several hundred copies of an issue of *Razorcake* to Barnes & Noble only to get several hundred copies of the cover sent back to me ninety days later. Usually those covers came with a bill that somehow explained why we owed them money. I'd nipped that in the bud a long time ago.

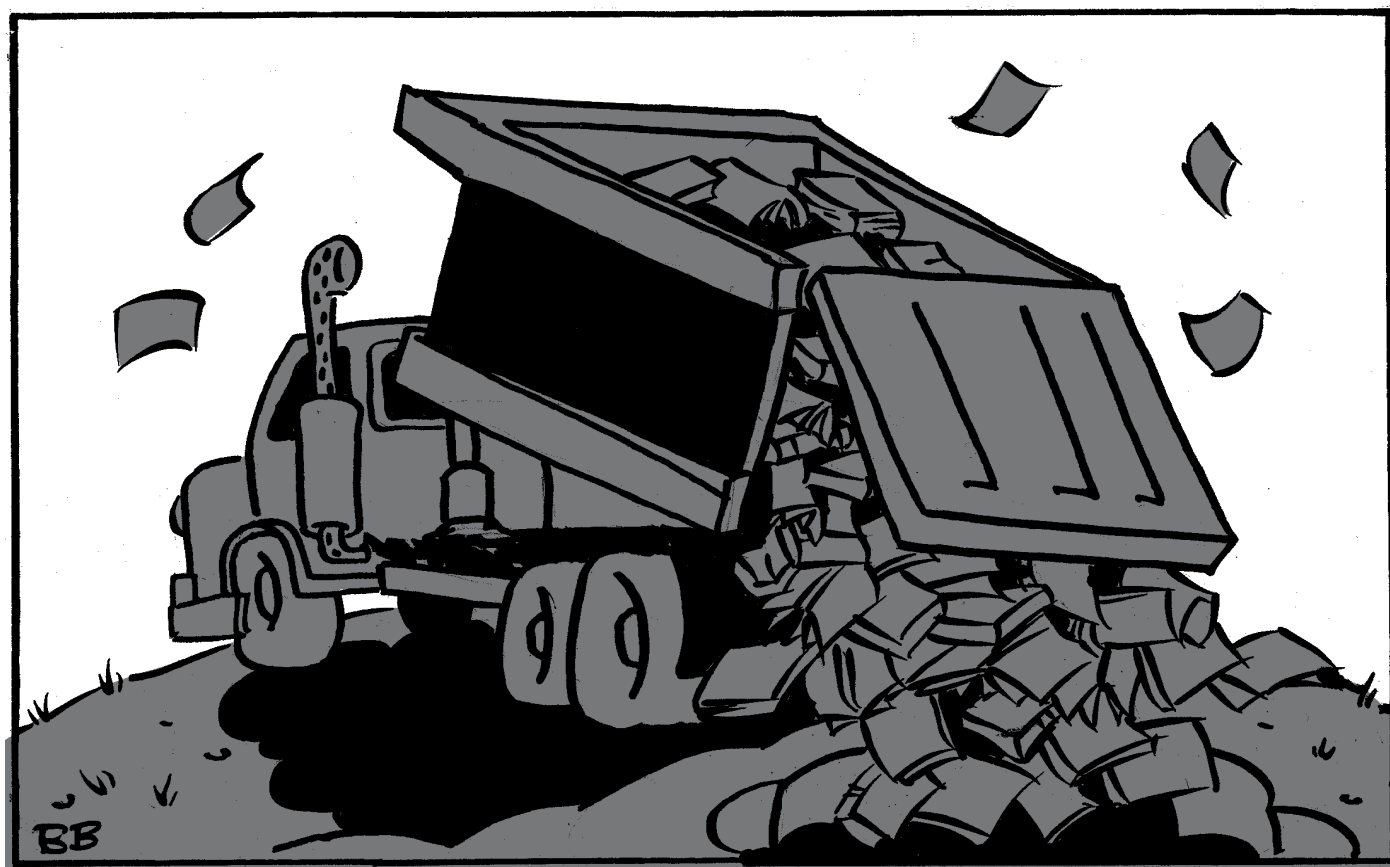
But it was different with Borders. They took the books. They paid for them ninety days later. We took that money and published our next book. It seemed simple. I initially kept a close eye on the returns. I had reason to believe that the books were selling.

I had reason to believe that the books couldn't have sold, too. I didn't understand how a Gorsky title, which may have generated some publicity in zines or in weeklies or through author tours, could sell at Borders. The whole store was so well controlled that the books couldn't have made it onto any display tables or end caps or employees' picks sections. They would've sat in the racks, only visible by spine. I couldn't imagine a thousand people nationwide being attracted by the spine of a book they'd never heard of, pulling that book out from the tens of thousands of others, and purchasing it. But the publisher's statements we were getting said it was happening. I kept printing extra books and letting it happen.

This went on for a few years. I took it for granted.

Then came the returns.

My understanding, according to our contract, was that Borders couldn't return titles after several years. Especially titles they paid for. But they did. They returned hundreds of them. The hundreds became a few thousand. My distributor credited their account and told me to come pick up the books or they'd throw them away. I rented a van, drove over, and got the books. I put them in a storage space. I then spent a few years trying to put these books into the hands of readers. I gave them out for free when I did readings. I ran a sale through the Gorsky web site selling each title for basically the price it cost me to ship them. I donated them to libraries. I traded them for credit at used bookstores. I sent some to prisons and some to programs that gave books to the poor. I made sure the authors all had plenty of



BRAD BESHAW

**I wasn't even the trash man initially.
I was his assistant. That - my humble readers -
is the lowest job on the construction site.**

copies. And I still had a few thousand copies of seven or eight books.

The problem was twofold. First, we know how many Gorsky books we can sell. We print accordingly. Had we not accommodated Borders, all of these titles would have done well. We would have sold the majority of the print run in the first couple of years after the books came out, and we would have had enough back stock to keep them in print. We would have met the expectations that kept the press sustainable. With these extra Borders copies, we had a debt with our distributor and the cost of a storage space because I couldn't bring myself to throw them away.

The other half of the problem is that it's hard to find a thousand people to give eight books to.

It took me a few years after the big Borders returns, but I've finally realized that it's foolish to keep paying for a storage space for these books. So here I am, rolling into the dump with a truckload of books.

I'd called all the recycling plants within a thirty mile radius of the storage space. None would take the books. I'm trying the dump. They do recycling here, too. The woman at the scales tells me to take the books over to paper recycling. The manager stops me after I toss one box into the paper pile. He explains to me that they can't recycle the books because of the glue that binds them together. To prove his point, he reaches into an open box of books and takes out one of my favorite Gorsky titles. He opens the book as if to flip through it, then tears it down the spine. "See the glue?" he says.

Yes. I'm well aware of the glue that binds books together. I wrote a book called *Glue and Ink Rebellion*.

He sends me around to the general trash pile. I toss the books there. As I drive away, a front end loader pushes the books into a pile of banana peels and toy packaging and used tampons and whatever else constitutes this mass of refuse.

My third trip to the dump is another mistake. I could've fit all the books into two loads. I didn't want to overload my truck. I ended up under loading it. The bummer is that the dump charges twenty-six bucks a load. I have to pay an extra twenty-six bucks to get rid of the last of the books. By now, I'm on autopilot. I don't have any deep thoughts about art and consumer culture, about the havoc wreaked by big box stores, about my foolishness, about wrestling inspiration from the jaws of futility. The old muscle memory from my childhood takes over. I grab boxes and toss them up the pile of trash. Sometimes the boxes break open on impact. I don't turn to watch the books cascade down the pile. I just empty out the truck and head off into the rest of my day.

—Sean Carswell



RAZORCAKE 07



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**"Memorials are
municipal art
for the masses."**

A Walk in the Woods

Part 1

On the bus ride to Paneriai, I didn't listen to the guide.

I blamed the loud diesel engine and the halting speech of the guide's broken English. I blamed the work I had to do and the papers I had to read. The truth is, I didn't want to hear what he had to say.

I have a complicated history with Germany's involvement in World War II. I know, "involvement" is a curious term here. It's like saying Geoffrey Dahmer was "involved" in cannibalism.

I've been a student of Germany's naval operations during World War II for many years. I'm interested in sole survivors at sea, a large number of whom found themselves in this condition due to contact with German naval forces. Some were German sailors.

I'm primarily interested in *unterseebooten*, a.k.a. U-boats. These vessels were at home both on surface and just below it, prototypes of the modern day submarine.

In the beginning, U-boat captains were the cream of the crop. Toward the end, German naval forces rushed young captains out to sea, where they were lucky to finish their patrol. The vast majority of these sailors died at sea.

Over time, I began to grudgingly admire these men. They tended not to be interested in politics. They were given a difficult job with suicidal odds, and they did it.

I read reports of U-boats torpedoing merchant vessels and then sticking around to present the captains of the doomed vessels with blankets, water, and maps. This was early in the war, when U-boats were the gray wolves of the sea. They could afford such magnanimity. Then radar was invented, the tables were turned, and the hunter became the hunted.

There was something noble about these men who answered not to politicians but the immutable laws of the sea. It was tempting to look at these German U-boat sailors as gentlemanly combatants. But the only way I could truly empathize with these men is to assume they had no idea what was going on in the camps.

I chose to believe that they were ignorant of what was happening to the Jews in places like Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and Dachau. So I remained ignorant, too. It was the only way I could justify all the research I was doing, the time and effort I spent learning about Nazis.

Granted, I was studying German naval operations in the North Atlantic, and sailors weren't permitted to join political parties, but they still sailed under Hitler's Nazi regime.

But they couldn't *all* have been monsters, could they?

I went to Paneriai because of Götz and Meyer.

Götz and Meyer is the title of a 1998 novel by the Serbian author David Albahari that was translated in 2004 by Ellen Elias Bursac.

Götz and Meyer are also the names of a pair of German soldiers whom the novel's protagonist discovers while obsessively researching his family tree.

While poring over historical records, the amateur genealogist encounters the names over and over again and begins to fictionalize them: one dreams of being a pilot, the other gives candy to children.

"How Götz, or was it Meyer, loved children! It would be hard to find the right words to describe the warmth he felt when his hands rested on their tousled little heads. He gave no thoughts to lice at moments like that, though he could often spot them crawling in the closely cropped hair."

Because Götz and Meyer are always presented together, never as individuals, Albahari suggests that they could be anyone. Just a couple of bit players in life's comic opera.

Götz and Meyer, however, is not a comedy. Götz and Meyer are SS noncommissioned officers responsible for picking up Jewish prisoners at the camp at the Belgrade Fairgrounds in a special truck and gassing them en route to their final destination.

The genealogist's research led to the gruesome discovery that Götz and Meyer killed virtually all of his relatives, many of whom he'd never met.

"For me to truly understand real people like my relatives, I had first to understand unreal people like Götz and Meyer."

Götz and Meyer is not an easy book to digest. There aren't any chapters or paragraph breaks. The narrative unfolds like a nightmare verdict. Fiction colludes with the facts of the Reich's unspeakable crimes, which are immense. The numbers coerce the reader to compute abominations.

Over 700,000 people were killed in the trucks the Nazis referred to as "soul swallows." Götz and Meyer alone snuffed out five thousand.

Two men. Five thousand souls.

The second half of the novel is more harrowing than the first. The genealogist is also a history teacher and his unhealthy obsession with Götz and Meyer seeps into the classroom. The novel culminates in an ill-advised field trip to the fairgrounds where the protagonist comes dangerously close to suffering a complete breakdown.

"Memory, I said, is the only way to conquer death, even when the body is forced to disappear, especially then, because the body merely goes the way of all matter and spins in an endless circle of transformation, while the spirit remains in a transparent cloud of mental energy moving slowly through the world and pouring, randomly as it first may seem, into restored matter, so that no one knows what they'll find in themselves when they look within."

When I looked within, I realized how little I knew about the atrocities committed in Eastern Europe. For instance, I had no idea the Nazi's mad plan to exterminate every living Jew extended as far south and east as Serbia.

For weeks after reading *Götz and Meyer* I walked in a cloud, rattled and depressed.

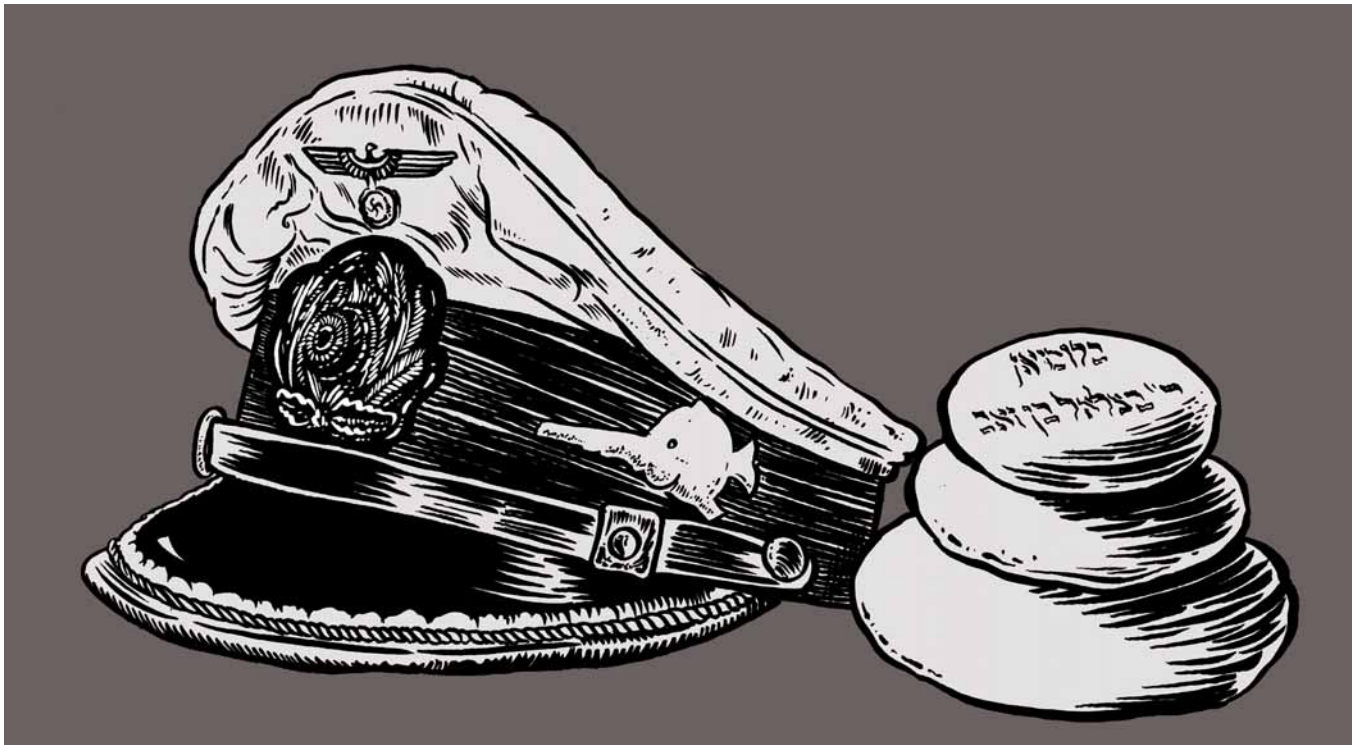
It was bad enough that the world had stood by and let this atrocity happen, but I found it even more galling that this terrible chapter in history had been largely forgotten.

If memory was the only way to conquer death, then my willful ignorance made me its collaborator.

After all, you can't remember what you don't know.

Albahari's "cloud of mental energy" was much on my mind last summer when I visited the Paneriai Memorial on the outskirts of Vilnius in Lithuania.

Here's what I knew about Paneriai when I got off the bus: between 1941 and 1943, 100,000 people were put to death there. The vast majority of these people—70,000—were Lithuanian Jews from the city of Vilnius. Also among the condemned were approximately 20,000 Poles, including 500 Catholic priests, and 10,000 Communists.



CRAIG HORKY

You can't remember what you don't know.

Before the Germans occupied Lithuania, the country came under Soviet control. The Russians began the construction of a fuel depot near a railway station in the forests on the outskirts of Vilnius. They didn't get very far in their project. They did, however, excavate massive holes in the earth—some were thirty feet deep and one hundred feet across.

The Germans had other uses for those pits. This was the extent of my knowledge. I didn't want to learn any more. I came to pay my respects. That's all.

* * *

I didn't expect the forest to be so beautiful.

It's an old forest and the trees soared. I could hear birds, and then something else.

It started as a whine and grew louder and louder until the barely audible complaint transformed into a moan and then a thunderous howl.

A train.

It's not that I'd forgotten what trains sound like, but in a quiet forest, you can hear a train coming from a long way off.

Those who were killed at Paneriai were brought there via truck or train. Many were kept inside the train compartment while their brethren were shot and disposed of in the pits. Just as the train shattered the silence, it destroyed whatever peace I felt.

Paneriai is not a place that puts one's mind at ease.

I stayed away from the rest of the group, preferring to explore the memorials on my own.

There are many memorials at Paneriai. Memorials to Poles. Memorials to Communists. And, of course, memorials to Jews.

Some are imposing. Some subtle. But memorials are memorials, edifices of mandatory solemnity.

I grew up in Washington D.C., a city of memorials. Memorials are municipal art for the masses.

On one of the memorials at Paneriai, someone had left a small pile of stones; three rocks stacked one on top of the other. I appreciated seeing the work of a human hand amidst all these monolithic memorials. A way to pay respect to a loved one, a relative, a fellow human being.

I went to look for a stone. Something smooth and round. Something shaped by the forces of time that would outlive us all.

I palmed a stone, measured its heft. It felt good in my hand.

I set it down on the edge of the memorial when I noticed the markings. Someone's name had been written on the stone. I couldn't make out the characters. It appeared to have been written in Yiddish. The stone, I realized, was a marker unto itself.

I put the stone where I found it, and selected another. It, too, bore someone's name. And so did the next stone I picked up.

I put the stones back and left the memorial, feeling very much like an intruder. I couldn't read what had been written but the change was instantaneous: the rocks replaced the numbers with names.

The phrase "100,000 Jews" had consigned the event to the history of the holocaust, the algebra of annihilation.

Joshua, Ethel, Anne tell a story.

I no longer wanted to be alone.

I joined the rest of the group, snatching glances at the faces of my colleagues: stunned, somber, some on the verge of tears.

Many hid behind their cameras. Overcome with an urge to document. Some sought higher ground to get a better angle, a wider view, and I wondered if that was where the shooters stood when they aimed their rifles into the pit.

They were clustered around the largest pit. A curious contraption stood in the center. Part ladder, part stile. It was used after the majority of the murders had taken place. In an effort to cover their tracks, the Nazis ordered the bodies of those who had been killed to be dug up and burned.

Can you imagine spending your last weeks on earth digging up the shallow graves where just about everyone you'd ever known had been buried?

I couldn't.

And that's when I decided I needed to know more.

To be continued...

—Jim Ruland



when we left the harbor, our boat followed the hippy boat for a bit



which I guess is why their band played above deck, while the Queens played below



anyway, it's not too surprising I spent more time enjoying the boat ride than the show



There was lightning on the horizon



And I didn't even get seasick, which is a huge step up from the last time I saw the Queens, and shit my brains out in the tiny one stall bathroom at T.T. the Bears while a long line formed outside.

xoxo,
liz



Shanty Cheryl's Photo Page
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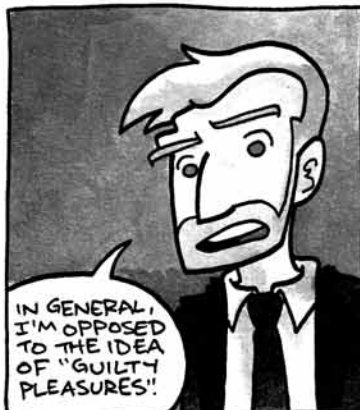
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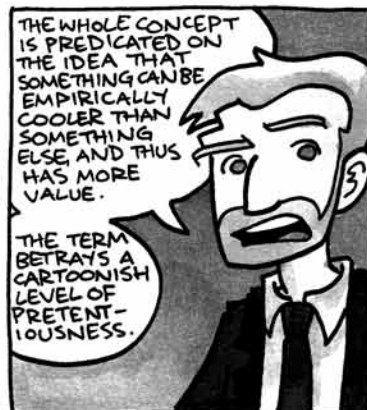
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MY STUPID LIFE

BY MITCH CLEM
WATERCOLORS BY NATION OF AMANDA



OR SO I'D THOUGHT. SEE, IT'S SLOWLY COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT I AM, INDEED, QUITE SELF-CONSCIOUS OF SOMETHING I FIND JOY IN, TO THE EXTENT THAT "GUILTY PLEASURE" IS REALLY THE ONLY WAY TO DESCRIBE IT:



FLAVORED VODKA.



THREE OLIVES MAKES THIS BIZARRE BUBBLEGUM-FLAVORED VODKA, WHICH I ONCE EXCITEDLY ORDERED AT A BAR AFTER SEEING IT BEHIND THE COUNTER. MY ORDER WAS MET WITH



I BOUGHT A BIG THING OF SMIRNOFF FLUFFED MARSHMALLOW, WHICH IS FUCKING AWESOME, BY THE WAY, AND GOT TO THE CHECKOUT...





“Pass the pruno.”

Why Chuck Berry Is Better Than You or Your Band

October 18, 2012 marked the eighty-six year marker that Chuck Berry was born unto our world; a slippery newborn soon ready to get his hands on a Gibson guitar and help forge (literally) a new music genre called “rock’n’roll.” It also must be noted here that there were two other heavy duty pioneers of the early trail that made up the holy trinity of rock’n’roll alongside Chuck Berry: Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis. If you’re a fan of the bands and artists that have graced these ink-stained pages, chances are you can trace back said bands’ musical lineage to Berry’s unmistakable chug of power chord application, laced with some of the most tasteful lead style one could ask for without turning it into a complete wankfest. Almost as equally important as Berry’s guitar technique is his way of incorporating a story into a song, peppered with what I like to call “Chuckisms.” A perfect example of a Chuckism is the word “motivatin’,” as heard on his debut Chess Records single from 1955, “Maybellene”: “*As I was motivatin’ over the hill / I saw Maybellene in a Coupe De Ville.*” You don’t simply pull this kind of talent out of thin air—you’re born with it. One can get the full, unfiltered history in the excellent book *Chuck Berry: The Autobiography* or the film *Hail! Rock ‘N’ Roll*, both released in 1987.

What follows are some reasons why Mr. Berry has remained a steadfast leader of his craft these past decades, right up there with his cohorts Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis (not to mention the later addition of one Lemmy Kilmister), or what I like to call:

“Why Chuck Berry Is Better Than You or Your Band”

The Beatles and The Rolling Stones—love ‘em or hate ‘em—the fact remains that both of these bands were some of the first travelers on the road that Chuck Berry and his rock’n’roll compatriots were paving just a few years prior. Both The Beatles and The Stones played more than their fair share of Chuck Berry covers, especially in their pre-signed/early years. The next time you’re at a party and hear a pair of Comic Book Guy types going at each other’s throats over which band was ultimately better, just politely interrupt and say, “They both started out playing Chuck Berry tunes. So please, both of yous, put a sock in it.” For further

annoyance to the Beatles fanboy/girl, point your finger in their face, whisper, “Bernard Purdie,” while nodding yes, and walk away. (Look it up. It’s funny. Trust me).

Speaking of The Rolling Stones, their guitarist, Keith Richards, got socked in the face one night by Chuck Berry after one of Berry’s gigs. Keep in mind that Chuck always gets paid in cash up front before any of his gigs. Always. The story goes that Berry put the guaranteed loot away in his guitar case before going on, as he almost always did. As soon as he was done with the show the night that Richards was in attendance, he cased his guitar up and proceeded to leave. Wanting to say hello, Richards tapped Berry on the shoulder as he was leaving. Berry instantly turned around, swung at Keith’s eye, and with one swift punch, left him with a shiner. If that ain’t punk rock, I don’t know what is. Needless to say, Richards didn’t do anything about it, and was actually kind of proud that Chuck Berry gave him a black eye. If anyone else cold-cocked a Rolling Stone, they’d be locked up in prison faster than you could say, “Pass the pruno.” (Berry did some time for tax-evasion and underage female shenanigans, as well as some time early on in the Youth Authority for teenage armed robberies).

When Chuck Berry does a show, no matter how near or far, part of his usual contract agreement is to have a backing band supplied. With this part of the gig in place, Berry makes it a point to almost always travel solo, whether it’s driving himself to the show or flying in by himself and cabbage it to and from the venue. The less people to have to deal with personally means easier in and out of each show. Pretty sharp. I can’t think of a single time any band I’ve seen or played in has done this. The cost alone would bankrupt a huge number of bands, but I’m willing to bet that they’d get along a hell of a lot better. People say that guitar players are the most unreliable bunch of a band. Homeboy Chuck has proved for many years that theory to be completely false.

Chuck Berry has had many a hit climb the charts during his fifteen-plus years as a recording artist. But, strangely enough, the only song to claim a #1 spot on the charts was a double entendre-themed tune called “My Ding-a-Ling” back in 1972. How a song (a novelty song of Berry’s, at that) about

some dude’s tallywacker made the charts at all, let alone peak at #1, is beyond me. But I do snicker every time the song is played:

*When I was a little bitty boy
My grandmother bought me a cute little toy
Silver bells hangin’ on a string
She told me it was my ding a ling a ling*

(CHORUS)

*Once I was swimming ‘cross Turtle Creek
Many snappers all around my feet
Sure was hard swimming cross that thing
With both hands holdin’ my ding a ling a ling*

Maybe if The Dickies were just a bit more slick with their lyrics for “If Stuart Could Talk,” it could’ve been more successful... nah, scratch that, it wouldn’t have been anywhere near as funny. “My Ding-a-Ling” even made it onto the third season of *The Simpsons*—one of the kids at the Springfield Elementary talent show starts singing it before being brushed offstage by Principal Skinner.

Chuck Berry recorded one of my all-time favorite Christmas songs, “Run Run Rudolph.” This tune always sets the mood for me every December, when insidious Christmas commercials have been shoved up my butt eight ways from Sunday. The only band I know that did “Rudolph” absolute justice was The Humpers. I strongly suggest you get your hands on it for your next yuletide party-rocking session. Now that I think about it, the MC5 and The Humpers are the only bands later on that have done right by Chuck Berry. (MC5 laid down a rollicking version of “Back in the USA” for their second studio LP with the same name in 1970.) Here’s hoping your band is next in serving up a rendition from Berry’s vast catalog.

Besides setting the pace for the onslaught of the British Invasion back in the early ‘60s, Chuck Berry was pretty darned instrumental in setting the pace for the golden years of punk rock, not so much musically, but more in the pulsating, throttling pace. When you take a close listen to some of your most cherished punk records, the music itself may sound little to nothing of what Chuck Berry or any of his cohorts recorded during their peak years, decades ago. But that relentless,



JACKIE RUSTED

Berry instantly turned around, swung at Keith's eye, and with one swift punch, left him with a shiner. If that ain't punk rock, I don't know what is.

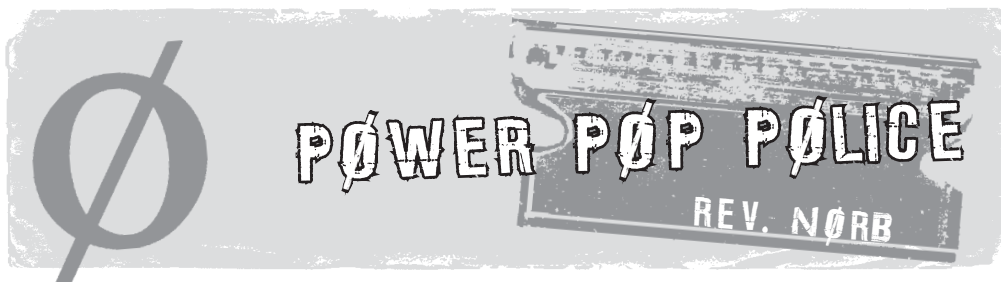
driving spirit, can be traced back through years of their influence, right back to Berry's home in St. Louis.

I clearly remember a handful of Chuck Berry LPs and singles while sifting through my dad's records as a kid. It wasn't until I got older, in elementary school—reading

in magazines about some of the bands I liked referring to Chuck Berry as one of their influences—that I went back and started listening to those records. Then it started to make sense, little by little. Maybe that's why I ended up being one of the biggest Ramones fans on this planet,

years later. If so, I have you to partially thank, Mr. Berry. Cheers to you and keep on keepin' on.

I'm Against It,
—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com



“A band shirt that looks like a comic book shirt appeals to me greatly.”

62 BAND SHIRTS ((AND THE WOMEN WHO LOVE THEM))

Memorial Day, 1998. I am standing in an old, repurposed glove factory in Denton, Texas and have just seen sunglasses-bedecked garage hopefuls the Chop-Sakis belt out a set of Rip Off Records inspired racket. A second gang of unknown locals take what passes for the stage to belt out more of the same. They're the Reds. They're all wearing red. Clearly deep thinkers. More to the point, the band is wearing matching red t-shirts, with a large yellow star silkscreened front and center. The comic book nerd in me is giddy with excitement: The red-shirt-with-yellow-star is a viable approximation of the uniform worn by Starman, a medium-obscure DC Comics superhero from the early 1940s. The concept of having a band shirt that looks like a comic book shirt appeals to me greatly; thus, after the show, i accost the band and demand to purchase such a shirt. To my horror, i am shit outta luck: The four shirts the band wears on stage—hand-screened with yellow house paint—are the only four such shirts in existence. Well, not to put too fine a point on it, but what the fuck, man? *Make some goddamn shirts! You're sitting on a gold mine here!* Think of all the punk rockers who love the Golden Age Starman! Heck, think of all the people who love Vietnam! This could be the next Furby™, guys. THE NEXT FURBY™!!! Much as i heckle and cajole them over the years, they never wind up printing additional shirts, eventually just giving me the bass player's shirt to shut me up. Fast forward fourteen years. I'm wearing my Vietnamese Flag Starman Reds shirt at the Cactus Club in Milwaukee, watching the High Tension Wires—who, along with the Marked Men, Riverboat Gamblers, Mind Spiders, etc. etc., are a sort of mutation of the original Reds/Chop-Sakis Denton mafia. Drunk with power ((or something)), i have a thought. A horrible, prideful thought: Given that this shirt is one of only four made, hand-screened by the guitarist and stage-worn by the bassist—and given the vast musical influence that the Reds had ((begetting all those bands mentioned previously, some of whom, like the Riverboat Gamblers, got quite popular [although, to be honest, i always thought that they were among the less-interesting facets of the Denton Gaggle]))—and given the high level of quality permeating their successors ((every single High Tension Wires and Marked Men record is worth owning [although if Mike doesn't shut up about Mitt Romney i

might be inclined to push him off another monitor]))—it might be able to be said that MY GOLDEN AGE STARMAN REDS T-SHIRT IS THE COOLEST BAND SHIRT I OWN. That's a fucking bold statement. It's bolder than all the barbeque sauce at Rudy's AND Ruby's, mixed up in a big vat and fortified with extra emboldening ingredients of secret manufacture! THE COOLEST BAND SHIRT I OWN!!! This is a position of great power and influence. *I cannot make such a claim frivolously!* Therefore, i decided a spot audit was necessary: Digging thru my dresser drawers ((and, regrettably, my hamper)), i pulled out each and every band t-shirt i currently possess—sixty-two of the goddamn things—for purposes of ascertaining whether or not said Reds shirt had any legitimate challengers to the lofty mantle of MY COOLEST BAND SHIRT, EVER. And, whilst my originally-scheduled recitation of the pros and cons of each and every one of my sixty-two band shirts proved slightly too voluminous a checklist to fit in my allotted space, i now present, with appropriate fanfare, TEN BAND SHIRTS I OWN THAT MIGHT BE AS COOL AS MY 1998 REDS SHIRT, MAYBE! Shirts are graded on Style, Fit, Quality, History, and Snob Appeal, and must be present to win. *Bon appétit!*

1. ALL: *Allroy Wuz Here 1988 Summer Tour: Pink/White on Black, 1988. XL.*

My old band Depo-Provera played with these guys a lot in the mid-to-late 80's. They'd stay over and we'd have these rather epic parties, stocked with embarrassingly large numbers of underage girls. This features a genius design by bassist Karl Alvarez, depicting band mascot Allroy in a darkened room—only cartoon eyes and grin visible—atop a clearly pleased Allroyette, her eyes and grin visible upside down underneath him. Tour dates on the back callously omit the space between “Green” and “Bay.” STYLE: **B+**; FIT: **B+** ((Still fits! Fucking amazing!)); QUALITY: **A**; HISTORY: **B**; SNOB APPEAL: **B**, because Andy of the Chinese Telephones has one and he probably wasn't even alive then. OVERALL: **B+**

2. BUZZCOCKS: *Fluorescent Orange Logo on Black: 1993. XL.*

Malcolm Garrett—the guy who did the new wavey graphic design for the classic Buzzcocks records—is my favorite graphic designer of all

time. Similarly, the Buzzcocks logo—simple italicized capitals, with slightly elongated Z's adjusted to so that they interlock slightly—is what i consider the best band logo of all time, with the possible exception of KISS's. I'm also a big fan of band t-shirts that are just the band's logo, presented without additional adornment. Therefore, a simple fluorescent orange Buzzcocks logo on a plain black shirt is just about the most perfect rock shirt envisionable. Cost me fourteen bucks when i saw them at the Metro in Chicago in '93, which was a lot of money for a shirt then—shit, it's kind of a lot of money now—but i justified the expenditure by virtue of it only being a dollar for each year i'd liked the Buzzcocks. STYLE: **A+**; FIT: **A**; QUALITY: **A**; HISTORY: **B-**; SNOB APPEAL: **C+**. OVERALL: **A-**

3. BUZZCOCKS: *Work Shirt: 1999. M.*

Although a work shirt is one of the more un-Buzzcocky garments imaginable, Boris The Sprinkler and the Buzzcocks were brief labelmates, so i wound up with one courtesy of Go-Kart Records. I wore it out to see early 80's fake rockabilly stalwarts the Polecats one night, since Malcolm Garrett did graphics for some of their records as well ((and also because i wanted to be the asshole who wore a Buzzcocks shirt to a rockabilly show)). Lo and behold, halfway thru their set they launch into a rockabilly version of the Buzzcocks classic “What Do I Get?” Wound up talking about the Buzzcocks with their bass player in the bathroom that night, but not in a 12XU way or anything. STYLE: **B-**; FIT: **D+** ((medium is no longer happening)); QUALITY: **B**; HISTORY: **A**; SNOB APPEAL: **C**. OVERALL: **B-**

4. DESCENDENTS: *All Tour 1987: Blue/Magenta/White on Black: L*

A crazed rendition of the “Bonus Man” character on the front; the ALL-itudinents (“Thou Shalt Commit Flatulence” “Thou Shalt Not Commit Laundry”) listed on the back. We thought these guys had lost their fucking minds when Karl and Stephen joined and they released an album of ridiculously idiosyncratic songs about losing your mind in a van, but the record has proven to be an absolute masterpiece of the ridiculously idiosyncratic songs about losing your mind in a van genre. STYLE: **B**; FIT: **C-** ((quarter-century-old Size L shirts aren't really happenin' either)); QUALITY: **B-**; HISTORY: **B+**; SNOB APPEAL: **B+**. OVERALL: **B**.



ALEX BARRETT

I bought it from Grant Hart after opening for them in 1983; he let me have it for four bucks, a savings of exactly one dollar.

5. DIE KREUZEN: *Cheap Trick logo: Red/Green on White. 1987: L*

Although many would say my yellow/black on white first album shirt from 1985 would be the crucial Die Kreuzen tee, i'm going with this one because it was quirkier and less common. Of course, the fact that Dan Kubinski whipped it at me after a Meatmen/Die Kreuzen/Depo show in Milwaukee, after which i wound up drinking Dan's beer whilst listening to the Cheap Trick bootleg "Samurai Rock Band" at his place probably doesn't hurt its case, either. **STYLE: B; FIT: C+; QUALITY: B+; HISTORY: B+; SNOB APPEAL: B+. OVERALL: B.**

6. HÜSKER DÜ: *Metal Circus: Black on Lavenderish: 1983: L*

In keeping with the band's shift towards the more melodic end of things and brief/vague flirtation with psychedelia ((i.e., Byrds and Donovan covers)), this is a real odd greyish lavender tie-dye or something. Bought it from Grant Hart after opening for them in 1983; he let me have it for four bucks, a savings of exactly one dollar. **STYLE: B+; FIT: C; QUALITY: B; HISTORY: B+; SNOB APPEAL: B+. OVERALL: B**

7. THE MR. T EXPERIENCE: *And The Women Who Love Them: Red/White/Black on Grey: 1995: XL*

Boris traded for a number of these shirts when we toured with MTX on what wound

up essentially being their comeback tour in '95. It's not the knife-wielding silhouette from the record, but a similarly abstracted, bottle-clutching femme fatale; a fine representation of Lookoutyness at its most Lookouty. **STYLE: B+; FIT: A-; QUALITY: B+; HISTORY: B+; SNOB APPEAL: C+. OVERALL B+.**

8. RAMONES: *Rocket To Russia cover: White on Black: 1979: L*

My first ever punk shirt. I mailed ordered this for \$4 from an ad in the back of *Hit Parader* magazine. It's the shirt in which i am depicted in the second edition of *American Hardcore*. The shirt was made in Pakistan. It is currently eight feet wide and one foot tall. **STYLE: A-; FIT: D; QUALITY: C-; HISTORY: A+; SNOB APPEAL: A-. OVERALL: B+.**

9. RIVERDALES: *Punk Rock Local 27: Yellow on Black: 1995: XL*

Another pickup from the '95 tour, this shirt is primarily notable because i wore it during the Green Bay Packers victory in Super Bowl XLV, as a substitute for my previous "lucky shirt," which had failed me miserably for fourteen NFL seasons. **STYLE: B; FIT: A-; QUALITY: B+; HISTORY: A; SNOB APPEAL: D+. OVERALL: B**

10. SHELLAC: *"Shellac Tech" gym shirt: White on Black; Yellow interior, reversible. Y2K?: M*

As opposed to the Riverdales, who made tees with a quasi-jock, Phy Ed shirt appeal, Shellac went them one better and made ACTUAL PHY ED SHIRTS—thick, reversible, short-sleeved things with a space in front in which to marker in your name. I had former Milwaukee Bucks head coach Terry Porter sign the name-space with a purple Sharpie™, which is going to really suck if we wind up in gym together next quarter. My only regret is that i listened when Albini told me i took a medium. **STYLE: A; FIT: C-; QUALITY: A; HISTORY: B+; SNOB APPEAL: C+. OVERALL: B+ until i shrink some.**

As for my Reds shirt, i'm giving it a **B+** for style, **B's** for fit and quality ((the house paint bends the shirt up all funky when you wash it)), an **A** for history, and an **A+** for snob appeal, for an overall grade of **A-**, mere percentage points ((via mysterious calculations)) behind my treasured Buzzcocks shirt, but hey—nothing wrong with second place. If it's good enough for Mitt Romney, it should be good enough for your old band, Mike.

Love
—Norb



**"That's right,
braces not
suspenders."**

Welcome to Southern California

"Welcome to Southern California" because there are still some places in this state that I have never been. A couple of weekends ago I went to a wedding in Tehachapi, only 150 miles away, but a place I have never been. I've always experienced the desert on the way east, never north. When the freeway sign reads mileage to Reno after one leaves the city of Lancaster, one realizes that the landscape will be barren for a long while.

When we got to our destination, we found the wedding just ending and pictures of the wedding party in process. The bride was in a beautiful, flowing white dress. The groom, well the groom was also in white. He wore a white baseball cap which never came off during the four hours we were there. When the hell did tradition get thrown out the window and the dress code become warped? Who knew that I would be the best dressed at a wedding in my pressed slacks, white shirt and tie with braces (that's right, braces not suspenders), and Italian shoes? Some people showed up with black shirts on. What were they attending? A wedding or a funeral?

The dress codes, in all aspects of life, are going super casual. As many know from past articles, I used to work in the grocery business. When I started, we wore white dress shirts with a tie and an apron. That was about as professional as one could get in a store. A number of years later, we went casual with polo shirts (one in baby blue and one in a nasty tan) that were supplied by the company. Those shirts stayed clean for about a month, until they started to fray and retain stains. That's the way it had to stay until they gave you a replacement a year later. At that point, the shirt had several holes that, hopefully, were covered by the apron.

Bring us around to present day. The polo shirt has been replaced with the T-shirt. That's right, Ralph's has given the employees black tees with some sort of printed message of lower prices or quicker service. T-shirts! Have we sunk so low that we think T-shirts give a professional appearance? Let me ask this, when you go to the doctor, do you want her or him to greet you in professional attire or a T-shirt that reads "I'll take any insurance medical group"? Or how about your bank's loan officer in a tee that reads, "Fast loans—minimal chit chat"? I'll take the person who took a little time to present themselves in a professional manner, please.

First it was customer service that got tossed out the window and now it's the

dress code. Customer service is so rare that when someone does it right, it leaves a lasting impression on the consumer—that last image that the person helping me knows what they're doing or gives a shit that they're helping me.

Image is important in defining a moment. In early punk rock, as in any music movement, image was important to convey attitude or beliefs, but in business I want some respect for myself and I get that from a respectful-thinking employee. I wasn't the most charismatic employee when I worked, but if some bitchy customer got on a soap box and talked down to me, I would hurry them on their way, not start a fight because I felt they were in the wrong. The customer is always right, even if they are a raging pickle head, and you show even more respect if they want money and are pointing a gun at you.

I've read recently the "Letters to the Editor" section in the newspaper and the words "hard-working Americans" comes up frequently. If I hear one more deep sigh from another person behind a register when I question why they scanned a coupon, made a beep, but didn't deduct the value, I'm going to write in and announce that the hard-working American ideal flat lined with a sigh. Hard workers are professionals who take their job seriously, want to succeed for themselves and their company and reflect all of that to the customer in his fricken appearance.

With that said, I'm now going to review some comics in my shorts and T-shirt. If you want me to write in a tie and collared shirt, write the editor and tell him; I adhere to the rules.

SPAZ #5

By Emi Gennis, \$2.00 U.S.

Excellent drawn comic/zine for those out there who love paranoia. My favorite part in this is the "Wikipedia list of unusual deaths" pages. It's almost like reading the *World Weekly News* all over again, with my favorite being the last page where a guy drowns at a pool party for lifeguards thrown by the New Orleans recreation department. This little comic is full of stories of death expressed in a "dodged-a-bullet-there" sort of way. I even learned about Münchhausen's By Proxy Syndrome in a section titled, "You know what's fucked up?" The artwork is awesome—real clean lines and detail to move the reading forward. I really enjoyed this book to a point of an obsession to get

the first four copies and to interest others in its bountiful information. (emigennis.com, emigennis@gmail.com)

HENRY AND GLENN FOREVER AND EVER #1

By Tornado, Neely, Luce, Marra, Nobles, Cooper, Yahnker and Keller
\$5.00 U.S.

This book cracks me up. Why Henry Rollins hasn't mounted his steed and ridden through the countryside to find these writers is beyond my thought process. To see these two as caring homosexuals is, indeed, comical and to add others such as the devil-worshipping next door neighbors Hall And Oates often makes me pee my pants. The beefcake in this comic is ridiculous. The best story is where Henry Rollins and Glenn Danzig go to a relationship counselor who suggests seeing other people or opening the relationship to a third, where we see Kerry from Slayer, Ian and his "not a Fugazi scarf," and a horrifying bed scene with Morrissey. This wildly funny comic is a must for all punk fans, and one more thing, Lita Ford... that's all I'm saying. (I Will Destroy You Comics, PO Box 39963, LA, CA 90039, iwilldestroyyou.com / Cantankerous Titles, PO Box 14332 Portland, OR 97293, cantankerous.com)

MANCHILD #6

By Brian Walsby, \$??

What a book! It's drawn like an old copy of *Mad* magazine. This book is a wonderful read for all us old punk rockers. It is a twisted guide to the history of rock'n'roll. Ever been in a band and know "that guy" band member? Well, the author of this title does and describes him to a tee. In fact, this guy has no problem dishing the dirt on many of rock's famous icons and grabs many laughs doing so. This book also has some awesome interviews with some old punks and new. Hell, I haven't heard about Scott Radinski since seeing him on '90s baseball cards. My favorite section is how the artist was able to turn many of America's graphic iconic photos into peanuts cartoons. This book was a labor of immense proportions and it turned out awesome. (tolivealie.com)

FIST FULL OF COMICS #14

By multiple artists and writers, \$ 6.00 U.S.

This one is a collection of many artists and writers and is the last of my collection imported from Australia. It runs the field



NATION OF AMANDA

Have we sunk so low that we think T-shirts give a professional appearance?

from surreal dance partners, to rides in an Argo (Australian vehicle), to futuristic and back, to the Sunday funnies, and all areas in-between. If you're ever in the outback, grab this one first, see what you like, and then go get it. (ffocomics.yolasite.com)

NIX COMICS QUARTERLY #3 & #4

By multiple artist and writers, \$5.00 U.S.

Wow, do I really love this title. Better stories than *Tales of Suspense*, the ones I read in the seventies when I went on long trips. You name a monster or creature and I'll put money on it—that you'll find it in the pages of these comics. Great artwork on the covers, too. Number 3 is great from start to finish. I really like the lead story where the record guy turns the tables on the devil himself. For some comic break, you get a page of "Bus stop Ned" to give you giggles in-between your full dose of scare. Readers will also get a kick out of the old time gag ads for toys and records. *Nix* is the best comic quarterly, so get your subscription in a hurry. (Nix Comics Quarterly, 1194 N High St., Columbus, OH 43201, nixcomics.com)

ATTACK OF THE ZOMBIE SOY BOT 12

By Tom, \$4.00 or trade

All the way from Pittsburgh. Go Pirates! Hey, do they still sell the flat hats at the ballpark? This zine is pretty cool. Many of the titles of personal adventures tend to be pretty mundane, but not this one. This author picks points in time that make sense, have a point, and—in many cases—are very comical. I love the story of the acquaintance who mistook a middle finger and spent way too much time looking for revenge on Facebook. Yes, indeed funny. I also like the fact that there is no fear in expressing his feelings for his best friend, his dog. I get it. Truly a wonderful zine of human interaction. (Tom, 5501 Colombo St., Apt. 1, Pittsburgh, PA 15205, zombiesoybot@hotmail.com)

NOTHING MATTRESS

By Brian Connolly, \$??

One strange little comic! This title is drawn and written as little children in dream-like states. The strange part is the kids, at points, talk and do things as adults with street smarts. This collection of stories has more characters

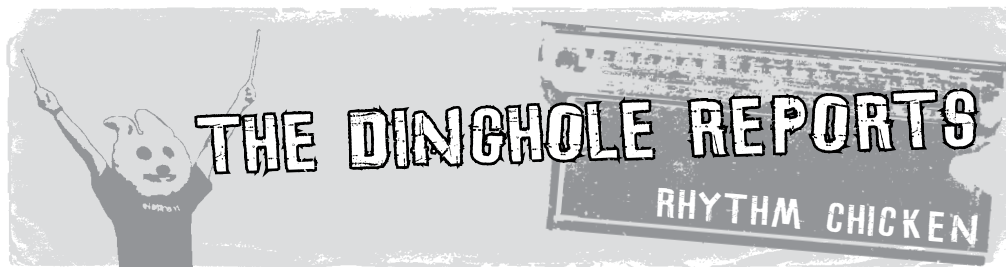
than a Jim Henson production. Not real sure about this comic for the mere fact that the characters look like six year olds but talk like college students at a gig. Really good artwork; just stuck on the maturity issue. (brianconnolly@gmail.com)

SCOOPIN TIMES #2

By Alanna Why, trades only

This woman is pissed at the world and I like it. When you put "enjoy your fucking sundae" at the bottom of your cover, watch out. What better way to vent the frustrations of a job than to make a zine/comic that explains how one really feels? I understand completely and I also understand how this becomes comedy writing. However, I will find where this ice cream shop is and avoid it completely. My favorite section is the notable written word on ice cream cakes. Truly, what are people thinking? Finally, a comic written from someone who is so past job burnout that it is indeed funny. (pukernation@live.com, pukeyparty.tumblr.com)

—Gary Hornberger



“The clogged exit helped create yet another captive audience!”

Bring the Lumber

I'm burned out! I've been working too much! It's September 30 and I haven't had a day off since May 15! I haven't been south of Sturgeon Bay since April 24! My next day off is looking to be November 6! That's almost seven months straight with no day off! How do I do it? I must be like Super Chicken, or something. I work twelve- to fifteen-hour days, *every day*. I think I've served seventy-one berzillion bowls of soup this summer. That is not an exaggeration. I average about four to six hours of sleep per night. I am a machine. I am a burnt-out machine. My main circuit board is fried. I continue moving due to electric nerve impulses. I've been playing a lot of The Briefs in the soup shop lately. I think that's the only thing keeping me going. Punk rock keeps the near-lifeless corpse twitching through the workday.

Well, it seems my second summer is under my small-business belt. Thanks to a rigorous routine of physical therapy and workouts at the local YMCA, my back is doing much better this summer. I seriously don't know where the summer went. I guess working *constantly* will make a summer go by in the blink of a bloodshot eye. I've got a little over a month left till the season is officially over. November 6, my next day off, is also election day. My only activity planned for that day is to clean out the grease trap. How symbolic. The next day I might even go south of Sturgeon Bay. Maybe I'll go to Algoma, maybe Dyckesville, maybe even... Green Bay! I dare to dream.

Despite the horrendous heat wave this summer, my business did well enough. I now have a staff of what I like to call “soup elves.” Different soup elves have different duties. Some are on morning elf detail, warming up soups and baking off the breads. Others are cashier and service counter elves, dispensing the soup to the masses. I like to think of myself as the “Soup Santa.” I keep the elves in line. I may not be at the North Pole, but here in Ephraim, WI, we aren't that far from it! Santa's soup workshop has been busy with scurrying little elves singing and dancing, ladles in hand!

Another recent unexpected development is that my shop has somehow become a hangout for the local theater scene. Door County has quite a few theater companies. Some of them are making their presence known in Santa's soup shop. Soup Elf Amy started working this summer, a part-time gig when she's not busy being the managing director of Door Shakespeare, a non-profit theater company. Soup Elf Dan started not long after that. He dispenses soup here when he's not acting onstage with the American Folklore Theater. Brian, one of my best customers (and an old-school punker enthusiast from Sturgeon Bay), is the general director of another non-profit theater company called the Peninsula Players. In some odd way, Santa's soup shop is now Ephraim's theater district! My indoor dining room seats eleven. No reservations.

Now that autumn is upon us, my daily numbers have doubled and tripled. I'm up late most nights making more and more soups for the next day. Summer just plain wore me out, and now the autumn rush is getting ready to do me in. As I said, business is good. I can't complain.... BUT GOL'DANGIT, I WANT MY LIFE BACK! I want to go see good live music in Green Bay or Milwaukee! I want to escape to Washington Island for a night! I want to sleep past 6 AM! I want a soupless day! *A soupless day!* Is this too much to ask? I want a day filled with pizza and cheeseburgers! *Pizza and cheeseburgers!* (Sigh.) I really need a day off.

So, Soup Elf Amy started her elfing career in mid-July. She is looking for new and creative ways to spice up “Door Shakes,” as most call it here. Well, she must be pretty desperate for new ideas because she put in a request for a Rhythm Chicken post-show appearance. At first I found the idea a little absurd and awkward. Then I realized that the absurd and awkward Chicken gig is the only gig worth doing! Heck, it's the foundation of my existence! Loose plans were made.

Dinghole Report #128: Theater in a Garden, Ruckus in a Parking Lot!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #i, that's the square root of negative one)

I finished up a long day of work, slinging soup to the masses. I left the dirty dishes in the sink and the floor unmopped. I had a high-profile gig to execute across the peninsula. Using the back entrance to the Door Shakespeare grounds, I snuck in and scouted out the parking lot. It was a full house and the lot was full. I could hear the show in progress in the nearby garden. Luckily, I found an awkward spot to wedge my car in so my headlights would be facing a small clearing at the exit of the lot. I had created my own little stage with makeshift lighting. All was set and I walked over to the garden to enjoy the last of the night's show.

As the show was finishing up, I quickly retreated to the parking lot to set up the post-show mayhem. The Chickenkit was assembled just next to the parking lot exit. I sat and waited for the theater-



The absurd and awkward Chicken gig is the only gig worth doing!



CHLOE CLAYTON

goers to start leaving the garden area, then quickly turned on my makeshift stage lighting, assumed my throne, and pulled on the dirty, graying Chickenhead. No one seemed to notice a thing till I started my opening drumroll. Many were confused and not sure what to make of the post-show antics. A few instantly recognized the home-grown ruckus and ran up to the new DIY stage and began cheering. The show had begun, and the show must go on!

I started pounding out my own sloppy yet lively performance, wildly beating away on my aching Chickenkit with Chickenears flopping this way and that. A crowd quickly gathered in the back corner of the parking lot and the clogged exit helped create yet another captive audience! I pounded away relentlessly as the crowd became more interested and inspired. A few girls started dancing up on my stage, next to the punk rock action! The scene grew more and more bizarre. It was perfect.

I halted and raised my wings towards the starlit sky. The crowd cheered. I dropped the wimpy little drumsticks and pulled out my secret weapons, the *Ruckus Logs*! The cartoonish sight of a dirty little chicken with outrageous, over-sized drumsticks drove the crowd into hysterics! Ladies danced! Women screamed! Men doubled over in knee-slapping hilarity! It was official. I had made a scene. It was time to draw my pirate performance to a close. I flailed about in wild spasms of swinging wings and talons! Drums and cymbals were ejected about the stage! I landed in a slovenly mess in the middle of the exit and lay motionless till the cheers died down.

The crowd sat waiting for more, but I had little left to give. I slowly came to life and used the Ruckus Logs like crutches to prop up my aching Chickenbody. I sheepishly bunny-hopped off the stage and into the woods to a round of applause. Later that evening, I spoke with my friend Bill who had just seen the Chicken for the first time. He was recalling the ruckus display with a smile. In reference to my mighty Ruckus Logs, he mentioned, "My favorite part was when the Rhythm Chicken BROUGHT THE LUMBER!" Theater will never be the same.

Okay, it is now just after 6AM on October 1. I fell asleep sitting up on my bed twice throughout the night while writing this. Now I'm off to the Y for two hours of stretches and sweating, then to Piggly Wiggly for groceries and more soup supplies.

In the meantime, I'm a slave to my self-made ball and chain. Someone out there please have a crazy, fun, irresponsible time for me! You know, get drunk, naked, beat up, whatever.

Punk rock.

—Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com

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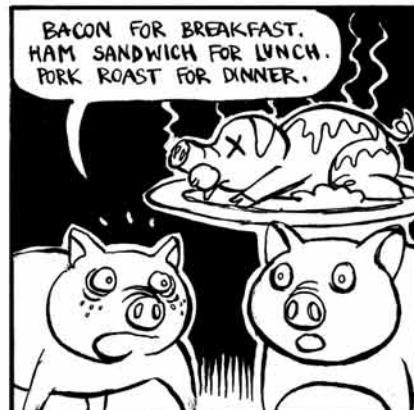
A HOLIDAY HAM STORY INSPIRED BY A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT PIG WHO MADE DELICIOUS CARNITAS TACOS



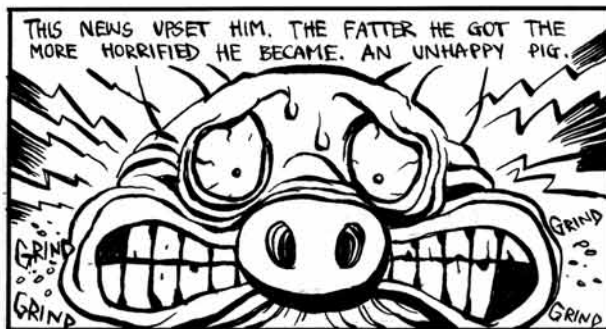
ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A HAPPY LITTLE PIG. ONE DAY ANOTHER PIG ON THE FARM TOLD HIM THAT THEY WOULD ALL END UP BEING SERVED AS FOOD TO THE FARMERS FAMILY.

WHY IS THE BARN LEANING?

PIG FACE STOLEN FROM RICHARD SCARRY



BACON FOR BREAKFAST.
HAM SANDWICH FOR LUNCH.
PORK ROAST FOR DINNER.



THIS NEWS UPSET HIM. THE FATTER HE GOT THE MORE HORRIFIED HE BECAME. AN UNHAPPY PIG.

GRIND
GRIND
GRIND



HE STUDIED THE FARMER AND REALIZED HE WOULD NEVER TOUCH HIS OWN POO. THE FARMER KEPT HIS POO FAR AWAY.



THE PIG THOUGHT OF A GENIUS SURVIVAL PLAN, HE WOULD ROLL HIMSELF IN POO EVERY DAY. HE WOULD EVEN EAT POO EVERY DAY. HE MADE QUITE A SHOW OF IT.

SCRATCH AND SNIFF

ALL THIS IN HOPES THAT WHEN THE FARMER CAME TO PICK THE HAPPY PIG FOR SLAUGHTER, HE WOULD FIND THE PIG UNFIT FOR CONSUMPTION.



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TINY LITTLE
NERVE...



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UP OUT OF THE
DARKNESS AND
MADE A 300 LB
GORILLA LISTEN
TO WHAT IT HAD
TO SAY! FIGHT
ON! MAKE
YOURSELF
HEARD! YOU'RE
NEVER TOO
SMALL TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE.

DOOT
DOOLA
DOOT
DOO...

DOOT
DOO!

WHO ARE YOU?

**"I'm thinkin'
three thou-wow-
wow with you,
y'understand me?"**

Nardwuar vs. E-40

The Human Serviette

Nardwuar: Who are you?

E-40: I go by the name a' E-Feasible-Bellafonte-Bearweather-Bellagiano, y'understand me?

Nardwuar: E-40, welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

E-40: Right on, thank you for having me, man.

Nardwuar: What's the importance of the Beverly Food Center?

E-40: Beverly Food Center? That's in my neighborhood, on the hillside. It's not there no more; it's called something else. But yeah, that man do, that's one of them days when, shoot, I'm thinkin' three thou-wow-wow with you, y'understand me? Mums, mums used to make me go, when I was a kid, go...go pick up embarrassing stuff for her 'cause we had a credit over there, like, "Go down to Mr. Jimmy's and get..." y'understand me? "Go get me um... uh... some tampons or something," you know what I mean? I was a kid so I had to go do it! But you, your pride in a way, but I say, "But mum, I don't wanna do that," but I had to do it. Stuff like that, I mean... shoot man. Beverly Food Center was... it was the hood, man. That's the soil, you know? And Mr. Jimmy and his hot tamales, that's what he had down there.

Nardwuar: Some of the Macks hang out down there too, right?

E-40: Yeah, yeah, a lot of people hang out there. All the OGs used to hang out there. You know, when I started, y'understand me, drinking—kids, don't do this—but I used to slide a OG a little bread there, give me 40 ounce, y'understand me? When I was underage, little bit, but don't do that now, don't do dat, don't do dat.

Nardwuar: E-40—Bay Area Old School—what can you tell the people about Calvin T and Magic Mike?

E-40: Oh, whee, the rawest rappers you never heard of, ever in life, from Richmond, California. Yeah, you dig. And man, I went and psyched Calvin T, probably in '96, something like that, and my partner, he got caught up. He had to do some time. But I got a little form to this day, man. You know, that dude was... he still got gas. You can find him on the block where, sure, four, five, or six albums that I've come with in March two-thou-wow-thirteen,

y'understand me, so... man, c'mon man, it was the people I grew up on, Calvin T and Magic Mike, Too Short, Freddie B, Ice T, KRS-1, Run DMC.

Nardwuar: Another Bay Area Old School person I'd like to ask you about is Hugh EMC.

[Nardwuar hands E-40 a cassette tape.]

E-40: Hugh EMC? Hugh EMC, from Frisco?

Nardwuar: From the Outta Control Projects.

E-40: Yeah, yeah, that's classic right here, man. Hugh EMC, shout out to Hugh EMC, man, he ask dem, he was way ahead of his time too. Yessir. What you know about dis, man?

Nardwuar: Well E-40, we gotta know about that! How about Con Funk...?

[Nardwuar hands a Con Funk Shun Record]

E-40: Con Funk Shun, man, Michael Cooper, Felton Pilate, y'understand me.

Nardwuar: They're from Vallejo.

E-40: And these were—they was before me, man. This is, these was, *them*. I'm one of the biggest things that ever came out of Vallejo, me and CC Sabathia and Jeff Gordon, but this dude, these people right here? They was... Sly Stone, them and Sly Stone, c'mon man.

Nardwuar: E-40, here's an OG number for you: 707*****

E-40: That's uh, I believe that's, shoot, was that Rush Force Records, was that...?

Nardwuar: Yes, it was Rush Force Records!

E-40: Yeah, Rush Force Records, that was my Uncle Saint Charles. Had a lot to do with independent music, laying it, you know, making a path for independent artists such as myself. Master P, JT the Bigga Figga, many more rappers. We learned together, you know what I mean, we learned together. Just be experimenting in this thang, you know, especially me and Saint Charles.

Nardwuar: It's amazing you remember that phone number! It's right on the back of the M.V.P. record.

E-40: It's right on the back. Let me tell y'all somethin', he just throwing these questions at me. Jesus, I just walked in here just now—he didn't, this, ain't none of this, ain't nothin'—he didn't prep me for this, and he dig deep, this is real spill, man!

Nardwuar: Oh, thank you, E-40!

E-40: Yeah.

Nardwuar: And we're gonna dig a bit deeper right now. Frankie Smith, did he develop izzle first?

[Nardwuar gives E-40 a Frankie Smith Record]

E-40: Well, I can't say he developed izzle first, but he, Frankie Smith, the Double Dutch Bus was the one. What it was, we was up in the studio and uh, my um, my brother...

Nardwuar: D-Shot.

E-40: D-Shot, that's right, that's right. D-Shot. D-Shot was like, we were trying to come up with a hook for "Captain Save-a-Hoe," and D-Shot just got, I say man, D-Shot just got the "iz-a-iz-a should I save her?" and yes, damn me, there was like them Suga-T, "I don't wanna be saying..." We just put it all together, we all collabed, you know what I'm saying? But no, it all came—"izzle-dizzle-izzle-sizzle"—you know how, you know on the Double Dutch Bus like he was gassin' it, you know what I mean.

Nardwuar: So D-Shot kinda referenced Frankie Smith there.

E-40: Right, without using any a' his material, but kinda, you know, the flavor and the melodies. So it came, it came, I say, well, it became a classic. That's back, that's one, that... when we made "Captain Save-a-Hoe," them was the days when rappers used to go into the studio and just make music from their heart. We didn't give a damn, and that's what I've been doing. We don't give a damn about radio until they ask for it, and so that's what happened. It was a-buzzin' on the street. So tough that the DJs were like, man, "Y'all got a clean version of this?" I'll say, "No, but we can make one," and I had it to him with the hurry-up-mister the next day, you hear me.

Nardwuar: So we have E-40, we have Frankie Smith with izzle, and, I was wondering, is this gentleman right here responsible as well for some izzle-ing as you open it up there?

[Nardwuar Hands E-40 a Mac Dre doll.]

E-40: Mac Dre, definitely Bay Area legend from my city Vallejo, California. He from another side of town, from the Crest side, and I'm from the Hill side. Mac Dre had game. Mac Dre grew up on the same people I grew up. People don't know Mac Dre grew up on Calvin T, Magic Mike, Too Short, Freddie B. So we would say sort of things that people think that he made up, well, or that people



BILL PINKEL

Jesus, he didn't prep me for this, and he dig deep, this is real spill, man!

think that I made up, but a lot of times it came from the people that was before us—Magic Mike, Calvin T, Too Short, Freddie B, you hear what I'm saying. True legend. RIP Mac Dre.

Nardwuar: So very important in the izzle development as well.

E-40: He was on the case. Mac Dre had game, he was gamed up. You know, 707, say it backwards.

Nardwuar: E-40, growing up in Vallejo...

E-40: Wait, let me say something. Let me set the record straight too, man. Me and Mac Dre didn't have no problem. We had problems when we was young and that was—he had problems and it really wasn't nothing. We was just speaking up for our neighborhoods, that's all. Wasn't nothing personal. Me and his men never got in a fight, never man. This dude was all right with me. We was on some grown man time before he passed, so git that shit out the way. Everybody trying to, you know, act like me and Dre wasn't cool. Tear that shit off, man, y'understand me? We didn't

have—we wasn't the best of friends, but we didn't hate each other. We had respect for one another, and we was trying to put some stuff together, so there it is.

Nardwuar: E-40, the Bay Area, Vallejo, growing up. Were you affected at all by the Zodiac Killer?

E-40: I was scared. I was scared. I was a little boy, 'specially trick-or-treating, y'understand. "Man, the Zodiac gonna get you!" And we used to trick-or-treat over there by Somerset and that was in some of the area like Columbus/ Priory way and up in that way. There used to be a spot called Gravity Hill. It's still there too, Gravity Hill, and we'd get in the car and at Gravity Hill goes, like you put the car in neutral and it'd go up the hill. I think it was on That's Incredible one time, or some television show, you understand me, it made it national TV. But yeah, the Zodiac man, you know, when the movie came out I was like, "Okay, they made a movie about the Zodiac, wow." I never put him in my raps because I just

don't condone just killing up people for nothin', y'understand me, so I never just dapped him up.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much E-40. Anything else you want to add to the people out there at all?

E-40: Man, if y'all end up on E-40 man, go snatch my music. Go pull up my catalog. Y'all gonna see that I am the rawest that ever did this thang, man. You got some cats out there that think 40 don't go. I got cats that I feel like you're favorite rapper don't go, y'understand me. And I make music for my fans and my soon-to-be fans, so have an open mind, man, and getcha game up, man.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks for your time, E-40. Keep on rockin' in the free world, and doot doola doot doo ...

E-40: Oo-oo.

—Nardwuar

To see this interview, check out nardwuar.com



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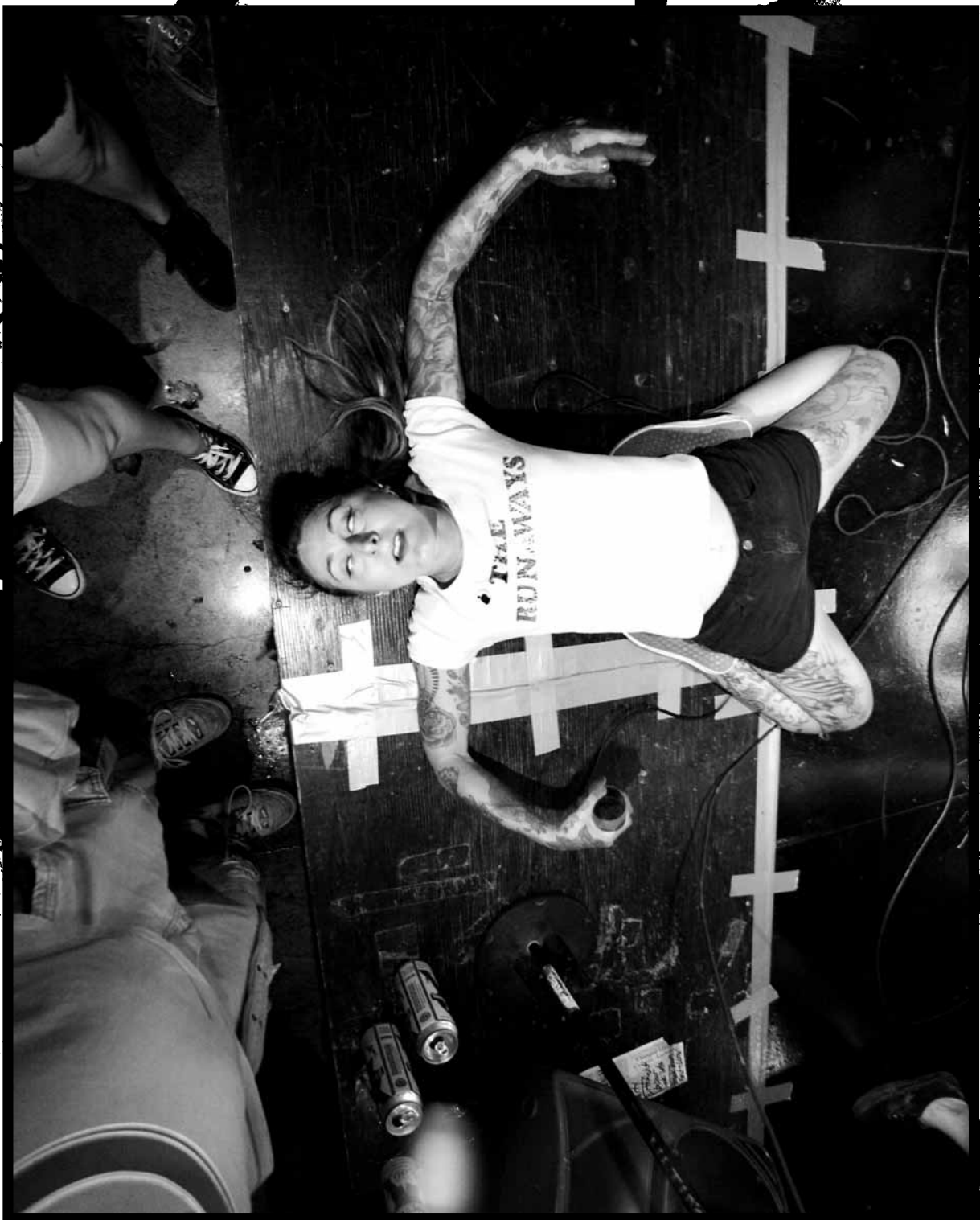
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Rachel Murray Framingheddu's Photo Page

Neighborhood Brats at Awesome Fest, San Diego, CA August 2012

BOMBÓN



San Pedro, California is a city soaked with DIY punk bands—past, present, and no doubt, future. Of all the great bands that have come out of the harbor city, Bombón resonates with me. They just don't fit in, and I can't get enough. Angela Ramos, Jerico Campbell, and Paloma Bañuelos formed Bombón in 2009 at a time and place where they were (and still are) the only DIY band around Pedro playing surf rock.

This is a band that works on vastly different levels, yet comes together in a completely harmonious way. Their songs are intricate. Their signature cover song is by Tchaikovsky. They keep vocals to a minimum so that they can concentrate on playing their instruments flawlessly. Their shows are unforgettable—they play loud, hard,

and tight with just the right amount of reverb—all while wearing totally beautiful matching outfits, or “team uniforms.”

Bombón is no joke, yet they joke around non-stop. They gave their part-time keys player a “gangster nickname,” challenge each other to karaoke showdowns, and even the more serious personality of the three (Angela—an analytical chemist working on biomedical/solar cell research) busted out her chemist jokes (yeah, that's right!) after the microphones were turned off.

There is much to learn from a band that knows how seriously to take their music and themselves. Bombón writes and performs with an inspiring amount of confidence. They do what they want to do, and they do it very, very well.

Intro by Adrian Tenney | Interview by Adrian Tenney, Ever Velasquez, and Todd Taylor
Photos by Shanty Cheryl | Transcription by Andrew Wagher | Layout by Daryl
Angela: guitar | Jerico: drums | Paloma: bass

Ever: I personally love when bands share common interests. Crafting is one of mine that I share with Paloma. Do you guys also sew?

Angela: Yeah.

Jerico: Yeah.

Ever: Awesome!

Angela: Well, probably not as well as Paloma but...

Paloma: I think we're all pretty good at crafting.

Ever: Can you tell me about Five and Dime Vintage and how it came about? Is it extremely hard for you to squeeze all of your sewing in with your full-time jobs and two bands?

Paloma: Well Five and Dime, I don't really do any of the sewing. We mostly started it because we all had lots of vintage clothes that we wanted to sell. So, it's kind of just all of our friends who brought all their vintage clothes. But then the sewing stuff is our friend Jessica, so that's a small part of it. It's mostly just a vintage shop—But that didn't take very much time—just pictures and uploading and then that's it.

Ever: Yeah, but that's pretty cool. I get to see all of you guys on the page.

Paloma: Yeah, I think a lot of those pictures, are just pictures that (Shanty) Cheryl took of us; a lot of them that are up.

Jerico: I think, to be honest, I've never looked at it. [laughs]

Ever: Oh, you should look, because there's pictures of you. [laughs]

Jerico: I will now. [laughs] I've seen the pictures elsewhere. They're nice.

Ever: What other crafting do you guys do?

Paloma: Jerico does a lot of crafting at her work.

Jerico: Yeah, I work at a before-and-after-school program, so I do arts and crafts. Today we made a Halloween tree. We hung ghosts and pumpkins and bats all over. So, mostly just arts and crafts for young kids.

Angela: I sew every now and then, but I'm not really part of the Five and Dime.

Ever: But I bet you are probably awesome at it.

Angela: [laughs]

Ever: Most people that I know who really don't sew that much are usually really awesome at it.

Paloma: Angela made me a really awesome bag once for Christmas a couple years ago. It was a silk screen that Cali Mucho did with Minutemen stuff, so she made me a really awesome Minutemen purse.

Ever: Oh that's awesome. That sounds really cool.

Paloma: Yeah, it was really awesome. And I actually don't use it because I don't want to mess it up. [laughs]

Adrian: Do you guys make some of the stuff you wear when you perform, too?

Paloma: Well we adjust things or cut things.

Jerico: I don't think we've ever made any of our outfits entirely.

Paloma: I think because we are really busy, so we try, but I think the band and work takes up a lot. I wish I had more time. I think if we did, we would do stuff like that. But we work a lot.

Adrian: You guys all have really intense jobs, right?

Paloma: Yeah, we have a lot of jobs and Angela goes to school, so we're all busy all the time.

Angela: I work up here (L.A.) as well, so it's three hours of commuting every day.

Todd: Whoah.

Angela: Monday through Friday, sometimes Saturday. I have a lot of work up here, but it's awesome. I love it.

Ever: Can you guys tell us a little bit about what you do, other than the band, for work?

Jerico: I work for a school district before-and-after-school program with kindergarten through fifth grade. We do tutoring, after school recreation, arts and crafts, all kinds of fun stuff. I like it. I think I like kids better than I like adults. It allows me to be creative and immature.

Angela: I mean, that's awesome. Kids intimidate me, so I do *not* work with kids. I don't know if I'll ever work with kids. Very intimidating. But I work at Cal State LA and I do research, renewable energy for solar cells. That's basically my job as a chemist.

Jerico: And I had to go first. [laughs] It was a mistake.

Ever: Are you also studying as well?

Angela: I am. I'm doing the graduate program there. It's pretty awesome. I'm doing both the solar—with the renewable stuff—and then biomedical research too. So it's two projects. Pretty intense but really, really awesome.

Ever: It sounds pretty intense.

Paloma: Angela's got the brains. [laughs]

Angela: Sometimes. [laughs]

Paloma: I'm originally a hairdresser, but I started working at Whole Foods recently and got promoted. So I kinda quit my hairdressing duties for a little bit and now I'm just making food at Whole Foods for a while. I really like it. It's really fun.

Ever: That's cool though. You're feeding the world, in a sense.

Paloma: Yeah, feeding rich people [laughs] gluten-free, vegan items.

Adrian: I'm wondering how you manage to do these really intense full-time jobs *and* be full-time musicians at the same time. I mean, you guys play a lot of shows.

Angela: Actually, my boss has brought up that issue. He was concerned with that. [laughs]

Paloma: Yeah, my boss has brought up that issue too.

Angela: I had to finally—sit down with him and I talked to him and I was like, "Look, I love what I do, but this is a form of meditation. I love my job, but this is how I meditate."

Jerico: "Band? What band? I do not know what you're talking about, sir."

Angela: I didn't want to tell him. He found out after we played at the school. He saw it in the school newspaper. He was like, "So... you're in a band."

Ever: "No! That was some other kids."

Todd: "That was my sister."

Paloma: I'm lucky that there are a lot of musicians where I work. Because it's kind of like an alternative... store, I guess. There are a lot of musicians and everyone is more understanding. Whenever I have a show I will try to tell work people like, "Yeah I have a show. Can you cover me tonight?" Everyone is really cool with that, and my boss is really cool with it, too. They hire people who are creative because they want that. So I feel like if they hire people like that, they kind of have to help us out.

Jerico: I think one of the hardest things about how much we play and how much we work is that we weren't having time to write new songs and practice. So it got to the point where we weren't even practicing. We were just playing show after show. September was really, really busy and tiring, and after that we decided that we were going to step back and start writing some songs.

Paloma: It was like a Harold's tour. [laughs]

Jerico: Yeah, we haven't put anything new out, so that's what we're going to try to focus on.

Paloma: That's where we messed up.

Ever: Are you guys working on new music, a new record?

Paloma: Kind of. We *want* to put out a new record and we've been talking about it and there's people who want to help us, but that's where we *did* mess up. We just started playing lots of shows. We never said 'no' to any shows and so we were just giving all of our time to all these shows. We never sat down and tried to work on more music. So that's where we're at right now. We just want to stop playing shows for a little bit and try to come up with music.

Angela: That way we can put something out so we can get out of here for a little bit.

Paloma: We want to go on tour really bad but we have to, in order to do that, I think we want to have a record out.

Jerico: I am sure people are pretty tired of our record by now.

Adrian: No, not me. You also recently added a fourth member, is that right?

Jerico: Oh yeah, Lazy Dog.

Angela: Yeah. We like to call her Lazy Dog.

Ever: Why is that?

Jerico: Why is that, Angela? [laughs]

Adrian: Because she's not here?

Paloma: It's her gangster name.

Angela: Yeah, it's her gangster name.

Ever: Nice. Do you guys have gangster names?

Angela: No, I need one. [laughs]



**We're
trying to keep
that surf
vibe alive.
Instrumental,
and really
focus on
the music.**

Paloma: I guess we just like to go, “Lazy Dawwg” and call her up on the stage. But, she does keys for us, for like half the set.

Jerico: She’s like the cherry on top. We bring her out and go, “We got Lazy Dog on keys!” Because when we recorded, we had some keyboard on the songs on the album. So it was nice to add them in the live shows.

Adrian: That’s a nice touch.

Jerico: Brings a little extra “oomph” to it. Plus she’s Angela’s sister and she’s awesome.

Paloma: We bring her out when it’s a good show.

Jerico: When we need to impress people. [laughs]

Paloma: No, [laughs] you know, like when it’s actually worth it. For all the shows we do, we don’t really ask her to play all of them. We’re like, “Well, you play these shows because these are going to be the good ones.”

Jerico: Plus my car only holds three people.

Paloma: So we have her probably half the time.

Adrian: And Angela, what’s it like playing with your sister?

Angela: It’s like it is at home sometimes—just kidding. [laughs]

Adrian: Because I’ve played with my brothers a lot, and, on one hand, I feel like it’s a nice excuse to spend time together, but, on the other hand, it can be hard just because it’s your sibling.

Angela: That’s true. We butt heads a lot. But I mean, I love her and I’m always going to love her. I think it’s awesome that she gets to play with us. I appreciate it.

Paloma: I kind of feel like she’s our little sister too, in a way, even though she’s the same age as us. [laughs]

Adrian: How do you know when it’s going to be a good show? Is there ever a show when you’re just there and you’re like, “Wow, this is way better than we thought it was going to be. Let’s bring out Lazy Dog right now!”

Paloma: [laughs] No, if there is a show that’s going to be a bigger show, we mostly bring her out for bigger shows. Not if we are going to be playing Harold’s down the street all week long; we won’t ask her.

Jerico: If it’s a band that we’ve been looking forward to playing with or something like that, and we want to give it our A-game, you know?

Angela: Or it’s also if she *wants* to play as well. She has that option. [laughs]

Paloma: Yeah. We’re stuck, see? We’re stuck. [laughs] She comes around if she wants to play a show, or if it’s a really good show and we ask her to play.

Ever: I personally feel a lot of love when I go to San Pedro for shows. It’s one of the few places that I feel this way when I go to shows. To me, all the San Pedro locals are very friendly and happy to welcome outsiders to the shows in the area. Are you ladies all from San Pedro? If not, how do you feel about San Pedro and playing shows there, compared to other places in California?

Jerico: Paloma and I are from San Pedro. Angela is pretty much from San Pedro. I do agree with you, I’ve always liked the vibe

that San Pedro has and we have a really nice group of people who just want to play music, have fun, and welcome people. Touring bands always seem really stoked to come through San Pedro, too, which is nice. And it’s always nice to come home to San Pedro.

Angela: I say I’m from San Pedro just because, you know, San Pedro has that pride. But I actually moved from Anaheim to San Pedro.

Jerico: We’ve adopted her now, so she’s official. [laughs]

Adrian: It’s not that far.

Paloma: Me and Jerico actually met in high school though. We both went to Pedro High together.

Jerico: “*Pee-droh!*”

Ever: Were you guys friends in high school?

Paloma: Yeah, it was kind of weird. I remember meeting her. It was weird because I was walking down the street—I never used to go that way—I just randomly went a different way that day. And I was walking down the street to meet my cousins and Jerico was sitting there by herself, and she had braces and had long blonde hair. [laughs] I don’t know why I started talking to her, but we just started talking.

Jerico: Well I knew Julian before I met you too, and Hunter.

Paloma: Those are my cousins.

Jerico: I think that might have been part of it, intersecting friends. I was the loner braces kid, apparently. [laughs]

Angela: The *cool* kid with the braces.

Paloma: I think I had braces too, actually.

Jerico: I think that’s why we were friends, actually. “Hey, you have braces too?”

Paloma: I don’t even know why we started talking, but anyway, I am glad we did. Now she’s like my sister.

Ever: Well we’re glad you did, too, because we like your band!

Adrian: Here’s to braces. [bottles clink together]

Paloma: She is like my white sister. [laughs]

Adrian: Can you tell me about the song “Duck Pond?”

Angela: That’s a cover, I guess of a cover. That’s a “Swan Lake” cover originally, but there’s another band that did that. It’s a Tchaikovsky cover, and I love that song.

Paloma: It was on this record that Angela had when we lived together, a ‘60s comp. It was a surf band that did a cover of “Swan Lake” and she was like, “We need to cover this.” So that’s how it came along. But I think we play it better now. I bet you we do a pretty good job now.

Jerico: It’s kind of our signature cover, I think.

Angela: I lost that record actually, and it was my favorite record. I think it was called *Rock on through the ‘60s* or something like that. It was pretty rad.

Ever: Are there any other places outside of California you’ve played that hold a special place in your hearts?

Paloma: I think we all agree.

Jerico: Alabama.

Paloma and Angela: Yeah.

Jerico: Aw, man. We got to go to Alabama, what was that, two summers ago?

Paloma: Yeah, I think we just really like all the people that are from there, and Bradley (Williams, All Mighty Do Me A Favor). Bradley is basically our brother or something. He is always around our house. He’s always there; can’t get away from him. [laughs] No, I love him. He took us there and I think The Pine Hill Haints, and everyone that we know, they’re just great people. They took us in and we just had a really great bond. It was amazing and the whole tour was amazing. I think we just constantly think of that Alabama love.

Jerico: It’s really magical. It was beautiful, the food was good, and there are just so many interesting places that are old and historic. It was rad.

Angela: I’m starting to miss Alabama all over again. [laughs]

Jerico: It’s been two years and we just keep talking about Alabama.

Paloma: I think it’s definitely the people, though.

Jerico: Definitely.

Paloma: It’s like Jaime, Katie, all of the Haints, Bradley of course, everyone. It reminded me of Pedro too for some reason... the people there. And then they love Pedro, so it’s weird, we were like...

Ever: In another Pedro.

Jerico: Yeah. You can tell they went way out of their way to give us a good tour, make us feel really welcome, and show us all the best things there were to see. That made it really fun and special for us.

Paloma: But we actually haven’t even toured since.

Adrian: You’ve gotta go on tour again!

Jerico: I know.

Angela: We need to.

Jerico: We need the funds.

Adrian: I read an interview you guys did once before, where you said “Bands play better when people dance.” Which I agree with, and I’m wondering why do you think that is? And what are the secret ingredients needed at a show for people to want to start dancing?

Paloma: I wish I knew... god! [laughs]

Angela: I wish I knew as well.

Jerico: It’s funny, we always get that one random person doing the crazy dancing.

Paloma: Like a crazy person.

Ever: That’s usually me. [laughs]

Jerico: Either we’ll get people dancing, or no one will dance, then there’s going to be that one weird guy just going all out and giving us his best moves. It’s great.

Ever: Do you dedicate songs to him?

Jerico: Oh yeah, we’re like, “Yeah!”

Angela: I feel like when people dance they have that huge amount of energy and that energy gets transferred onto us.

Jerico: It puts a smile on my face.

Paloma: Or I think it just shows you that they’re digging it too, so you’re like, “Yeah! I’m going to play better.”

Jerico: Mutual hype, pumping each other up.

Paloma: Yeah, that's what it is. You're pumping each other up. But I don't know, I wish I really knew how to make them dance. I think sometimes they are kind of like tripped out by us too. And they're kind of like, "Whoa." Because we get that a lot, where they're just like, "Oh, we didn't know you guys could play." [laughs]

Todd: What do they expect? What, that you would just stand there?

Paloma: I think they think that we're just going to play a little punk rock song and dance or sing. I don't know. [laughs]

Angela: I feel like that also comes along with—like right when we get there—"Oh, do you guys need help? Do you girls need help? We'll help you." And then once we're done playing, they don't want to help us. Like, "Okay you guys can handle your instruments, so you can carry your amps."

Paloma: I know, I hate that. My bass is gigantic, so I always get people asking me to help and I'm like, "Dude, I play this thing like everyday. I got it." I don't want to be mean or anything, but it's my instrument, I got it. If I am going to play it, I should be able to carry it.

Jerico: Man, I've had guys try to set up my drum stands and stuff before and I'm like, "Excuse me, thank you, but no thank you."

Angela: They're trying to hit on you.

Jerico: "Why are you touching that?"

Adrian: What are some of the other surprising challenges that you've faced being an all-female band?

Paloma: I have this argument with Rawl all the time because he's always like, "It's not because you guys are a girl band." And I'm like, "Well, you're not a girl, so you don't know." But it *is*. We do get that sometimes, and I think it is because we're girls. People don't really think we're going to be able to play our instruments.

Jerico: Sometimes, but it just depends on where you are I guess, because there's a lot of really badass girl bands that no one's going to question for a second. So I guess it just depends on what kind of people you're with and their attitude toward those kinds of things.

Angela: I also feel like that happened in the beginning when we were first a band, but not so much now. But I still get those comments like, "You guys should sing more." It kind of upsets me a little bit just because we're a *surf* band that has *some* vocals. Not the other way around.

Paloma: I think that's why at the beginning we said we weren't going to sing. Because that's just what's going to be expected of a girl band, is singing. We were just like, "Let's just concentrate on trying to play really good."

Adrian: And you do.

Jerico: Plus we're trying to keep that surf vibe alive. Instrumental, and really focus on the music. And it's hard to sing playing our songs sometimes [laughs].

Ever: Can you guys talk about your equipment? I notice that all of you have such nice instruments. I know one of you got one hell of a birthday present in the form of a git-fiddle, guitar.

Paloma: Okay. I really like my bass, my original bass, because it's really big and it sounds really awesome because it kind of sounds like the standup bass. So that's why I picked it. But, yeah, I got a really awesome gift. I've been using it lately and now I feel kind of bad because I leave the room and I see my old bass there. I'm like, "I'm sorry, I'm going to take this one today."

Ever: It's good to have a back up, too.

Paloma: It's a lot smaller too, and it has a little body. I realize after playing the big one and now playing the little one, it's made me better because I don't have the weight of it.

Angela: I have a 1957 Harmony Rocket. I love that guitar. I have another guitar but it has a different sound tone. I



I love
my job,





but this
is how I
meditate.

used it once when we first played, Bombón, when I first got it, but I haven't really figured out the sound for that guitar. My other guitar is awesome. It's a '60s Maxitone Bruno. But I love my Harmony, I love that guitar.

Jerico: I think it's kind of synonymous with you. Like you picture Angela and you picture her little red guitar. [laughs] I play a Gretsch Catalina Club jazz kit. I got an eighteen inch bass drum and it trips everybody out all the time. They're like, "Ah it's so tiny," and I'm like, "Well I'm sort of tiny so that way I can pick it up." But I tend to hit really, really hard so the small doesn't really matter. I like to keep it simple. I don't use hi-hats. That's another thing, people are like, "Where are your hi-hats?" "I don't know, I don't like crossing my arms, I'm sorry." [laughs] I like my pearly set. She's adorable.

Adrian: When did you guys start playing your instruments?

Jerico: I actually picked up drums for Bombón. I knew a little bit, not much. But I think just jamming and playing together, I picked it up as we started playing. I'm still learning. It's a process. I'm learning as I go along.

Adrian: Of course, we all are.

Paloma: I picked my bass up for the band, too. I didn't play anything before the band. I had a bass that I got for my fifteenth birthday. I'd never picked it up. So when I talked to these ladies about starting a band I was like, "I'll play bass. I have one."

Ever: That's perfect!

Paloma: And I didn't even end up using that one. I ended up using Rawl's bass or something. But it was hard at first. Not until recently did I realize it's totally the right instrument for me. I love bass and it's rad. It's like the heart of the song. People don't really notice it, but if you mess up, people notice.

Angela: I've been playing guitar for over eight years now. I love guitar.

Adrian: It's really amazing to me that the two of you started playing bass and drums *for* this band, because you're all *really* good at them. So how did you know you were going to be so good at these instruments? How did you know you'd be such a killer drummer?

Jerico: Aw, killer! I don't know about that. [laughs] I was in another band when I was in high school where I played guitar. Just kind of dabbled with guitar for a couple of years, then learned a little bit of drums for one song. We had this one song and I couldn't play the song and sing at the same time. So me and my drummer, Anthony, would switch and he'd play guitar. He taught me the drums for the song so he could play the hard part and sing it. I could sing playing drums, so that was my first experience playing drums and I liked it, so I decided that I would try it. "I could be a drummer, sure." [laughs]

Ever: So you guys have a side project? Bees Knees.

Jerico: Yeah, we just started a little three piece, Paloma and I, with our roommate, Trevor. I play guitar, Trevor plays drums, Paloma's on bass. It's kind of like a '90s garage rock, pop rock, kind of a goofy girl sort of sound.

Paloma: I like it. It's fun. I have a lot of fun in that band.

Angela: They're totally awesome.



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Paloma: Actually, Angela goes to all of our shows.

Angela: Yeah. [laughs]

Ever: Do you feel it's easier starting another band after you started the first one?

Paloma: Yeah, for me it was. Jerico had played guitar already. She played guitar before she played drums so she had some songs. But for me it was way easier. Starting Bombón was hard because I was struggling. I didn't really know how to push down right on the strings, and the bass is so big. But this time it's just right into it. The songs are

Paloma: Yeah! TLC, too. TLC is awesome.

Adrian: That's not embarrassing.

Ever: Some people are embarrassed to say that.

Paloma: That's not embarrassing?

Ever: Some people would be like, "Oh dude, that's not mine."

Adrian: No, because if I saw you doing karaoke to that I would just be like, "Fuck yes!"

Jerico: I just secretly want some soul, that's why. [laughs]

Paloma: Jerico is very white. [laughs] But she's got a little Mexican at heart. She

Jerico: "Let's play the Hollywood Bowl!" [laughs]

Paloma: And if I'm going to play with those bands, I want it to be in a tiny little place close to home, and we could walk to Fifteenth street and hang out.

Jerico: "You guys want a beer? Let's go to the taco truck."

Paloma: I think that's a good lineup right there.

Angela: Maybe Roky Erickson, too. Throw him in there, just because he's awesome. [laughs]

Adrian: One thing that is immediately noticeable about your live performances

We're a surf band that has some vocals. Not the other way around.

really fun and it's completely different than Bombón, so I feel like I needed it because it helps me get better. I just needed something a little different too. I like it. It's fun.

Jerico: The only thing that's been slightly challenging for me—I think I'm getting over it though—I'm used to being in the back. I've been in the back now for three or four years and then having to go up front and sing and be entertaining while playing guitar; I gotta figure out the stage presence thing. [laughs]

Paloma: Also playing with Trevor, he's a really rad drummer. So I need to keep up with him and that's fun to me right now.

Jerico: Yeah, I think that's number one: we like to have fun. We're so goofy at practice.

Paloma: Yeah, we're weird. [laughs]

Jerico: We can't even get anything done half the time. Just making butt jokes and stuff.

Paloma: All three of us live together too, so it's kind of like we are siblings. We're really weird and joke around about butts and stuff. [laughs]

Adrian: What are some other musical interests and influences other than garage/surf rock and punk that you guys have? Do you think it's important to have musical variety?

Paloma: Yeah, definitely.

Jerico: Totally.

Paloma: All three of us like surf and we like punk and stuff, but then Jerico likes more poppy stuff, and we all have different other music that we like too.

Ever: Anything you guys are embarrassed to say?

Paloma: Embarrassed?

Adrian: Yeah, what's the weirdest one?

Paloma: Hmm. Destiny's Child [laughs]

Jerico: Oh, dude. I love Destiny's Child!

Paloma: I don't know why, but when their song comes on the radio, I know all of it. I knew all the lyrics.

Jerico: In karaoke, I challenge you to Destiny's Child.

Ever: I think I know all of their songs, too. TLC, too.

definitely makes really good chile verde, so that gives her Mexican credit.

Jerico: I am an honorary Mexican.

Adrian: So, you are an honorary Mexican, Angela is an honorary San Pedran, what is Paloma an honorary?

Paloma: They'd have to say because I don't know. I guess I'm just...

Jerico: Paloma is just OG, you know? She doesn't need to be honorary. [laughs]

Paloma: I don't know, I'm just Mexican and from Pedro, that's it. I stick to my roots.

Ever: I think your band name represents you ladies well. For those of us who don't speak Spanish, can you please let us know what *bombón* means, and why you chose it?

Angela: *Bombón* means marshmallow in Spanish. And we basically wanted something that was bubbly, and I don't know...

Paloma: Something happy and fun. It's, literally, bubbly. In Spanish it's marshmallow. *Bombón*. We had our songs and we were like, "Uh, what are we going to name our band?" and then Angela said "Bombón," and we were like, "All right." We didn't even talk about it ever again.

Jerico: It's hard. People are like, "What are you called? Bon Bon? The Bon Bons?"

Angela: Or "Bomb On," I'm like, "No!"

Jerico: Even tomorrow, we're playing a car show and we're on the flyer and the set list and everything as, "The Bon Bons."

Paloma: They always misspell our name.

Jerico: "Hey, it's the Bon Bons!"

Paloma: We were on a comp and they misspelled our name.

Jerico: Yeah, on the comp. It was pretty janky.

Ever: If you guys could have a dream line up with any band, from any time period, any venue, what would it be?

Angela: Oh man, The Cramps. I just have to put The Cramps out there.

Paloma: I think Cramps and probably Holly Golightly. I think Harold's because I'd rather play a small place.

is that you always wear really beautiful matching outfits which you have referred to as your "shtick" and as a nod to the girl surf bands of the past. And I think it poses some questions to the audience, at least to me, about femininity and masculinity. It brings a quality to your performance which is very feminine, but also at the same time very fucking capable of succeeding and excelling in a traditionally male-dominated field. I'd like to know what you guys think about that and if it is intentional.

Paloma: Well, have you guys ever seen that documentary that Béla Fleck did and he plays banjo in Africa? He was saying that the banjo comes from Africa. So he goes to Africa and is playing with all these African bands and they all have the same shirts and stuff. So that's kind of what I feel like we do.

Adrian: Like a team?

Paloma: Yeah, it's like a team. And, also, we could look cute too! [laughs]

Angela: I definitely don't see it as like a feminist thing. It's more of a fashion statement. Or so you're able to kind of see, "Oh, that's the band." Because there were, and there are other bands—even male bands—that dress alike, so it kind of goes both ways.

Adrian: But you guys aren't wearing all jeans and T-shirts. You're wearing dresses a lot of the time.

Jerico: Yeah. It's fun to go out and party, and get dressed up together in our team outfit for the night, go spout out some badass music and look rad; to embody those rad chicks of the past who also did their thing.

Angela: Even with the outfits, we're still going to be females, we're going to be feminine. We're not going to be able to hide the fact that we're feminine and I don't think we should. I think we should embrace it. We're females, we're in a band. I think it's awesome. I'm all for female power.

Adrian: I think it's great because I don't see a whole lot of that in the punk scene. I feel

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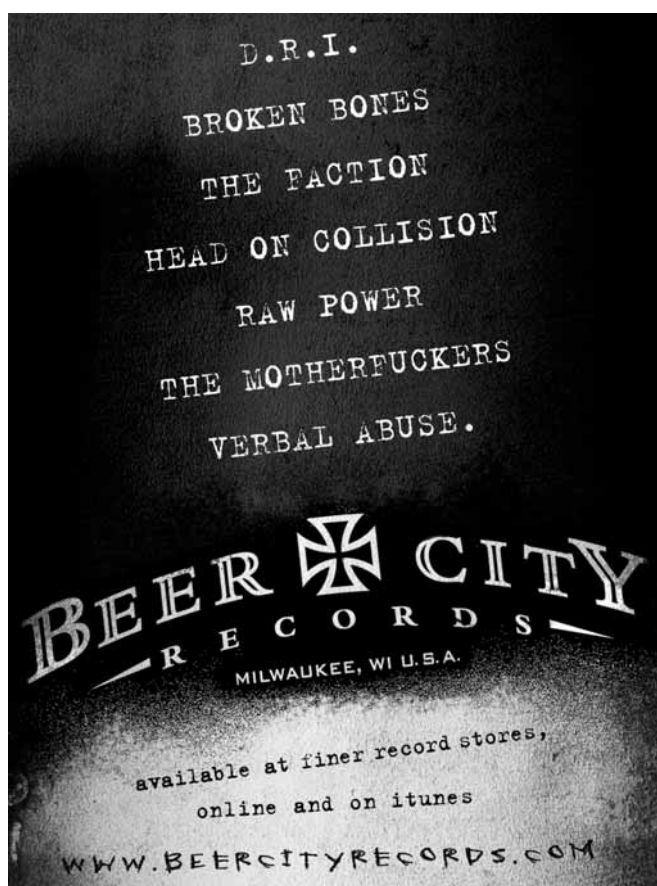
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it's pretty refreshing to see a band looking feminine and embracing that and—at the same time—just totally killing it onstage. I really enjoy it.

Angela: I do feel it's weird because there's a stigma within the music scene. It's like you either look like you are non-feminine and you're on one side of the spectrum or the other. I feel like that's why we embrace our inner femininity.

Paloma: And I think we're all into fashion, too.

Jerico: We like to look our best.

Adrian: It just makes sense for who you are.

Jerico: Plus we really like shopping, so we get to go do it together. [laughs]

Paloma: But we've actually all gotten really lazy lately. We're like, "Eh." And we haven't matched recently.

Angela: But we've been playing Harold's a lot so it's okay. [laughs]

Ever: You should all play in pajamas! [laughs]

Paloma: Dude! If Harold's paid us to do advertising for how many times we've said it, we would have made some money by now.

Ever: That's true.

Paloma: And he would appreciate those.

Ever: "Come to Harold's!"

Paloma: I mean it's horrible, but it's the only place that actually lets us party. And it's just a block away. There are old Pedro biker dudes, and you know...but it's still cool.

Adrian: What's next for you guys? You're going to take it easy, write some new songs?

Paloma: I doubt it! [laughs] I think we're saying we're going to take it easy but...

Jerico: We keep saying yes to shows. "Oh cool, all right. Let's do that one."

Angela: Actually we want to go to New York...

Jerico: We want to go to Japan some day. That's what we've talked about since the beginning.

Adrian: It's the dream, the dream come true.

Paloma: We will.

Angela: We will, definitely.

Jerico: We have done a little bit of recording with Todd Congelliere recently, some of the new songs that we have, and we've got a couple.

Paloma: Yeah, we've kind of started. We did that to push us towards doing more. We just set up a few little recording meetings

and just randomly did a couple of songs. He has them saved. Those are the songs that we hadn't recorded, and aren't anywhere yet, that we still play. So we were just like, "Let's get those recorded and done so we can use those toward the record." But now we just need to write and record more to get enough for a record. I think Todd would probably do it, I mean he's already done half of it.

Angela: One of those songs... because we've done three, right?

Paloma: Well, we did four, because one for that comp.

Angela: Yeah, that's what I was going to mention. We are going to be on this '60s, *Girls in the Garage* comp. We did one cover for that.

Todd: Who's putting it out?

Angela: Our friend Heather. We're really excited. I can't wait to hear it.

Ever: Cool.

Adrian: Cool. Okay. Well, thanks guys.

Angela: Thank you

Jerico and Paloma: Thanks!



Pee-droh!



Kid Congo Powers at the Jensen Rec Center MATT AVERAGE



KID CONGO POWERS

INTERVIEW BY RYAN LEACH
PHOTOS BY MATT AVERAGE & LARRY HARDY
LAYOUT BY KEITH BOSSON

Kid Congo Powers has one impressive track record. He founded The Gun Club with blues punk legend Jeffrey Lee Pierce. Kid later joined The Cramps and Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, playing on some of their best records. Over the past several years he's released standout albums with his band Kid Congo Powers And The Pink Monkey Birds.

Kid was born Brian Tristan in La Puente, California. He was a child in the mid 1960s. Surrounded by hip older sisters and the sounds of East Los Angeles, Kid became a music fan at a very young age. In the late- '70s, he met Jeffrey Lee Pierce. Pierce convinced Kid to pick up the guitar and form a band with him called The Creeping Ritual, an early incarnation of The Gun Club. In the late 1980s, Kid left The Gun Club and joined The Cramps. It was a trial by fire as The Cramps had already recorded a seminal debut record with Alex Chilton and were regarded as trailblazers. Kid worked hard and learned fast, immediately recording *Psychedelic Jungle* with the band.

In 1984 Kid rejoined The Gun Club for *The Las Vegas Story*. He moved to England during a brief break from the band and fronted a short-lived group called Fur Bible. Just after the release of Fur Bible's sole EP, he left the U.K. for West Berlin.

Kid arrived in Berlin a few years before the fall of The Berlin Wall. Although the city had been divided for more than three decades, West Berlin had a vibrant arts scene. He jumped right in, taking part as a member of The Bad Seeds in Wim Wenders' incredible film, *Wings of Desire*.

After leaving The Bad Seeds and The Gun Club in the early 1990s, Kid formed Congo Norvell with Sally Norvell in Los Angeles. He later moved to New York and joined The Knoxville Girls.

In the early 2000s, Kid established himself as a formidable frontman, recording solid albums with The Pink Monkey Birds. Kid Congo Powers' recent material is incredibly vibrant—inspired by the sense of excitement, sound, and stories of his childhood in La Puente.

Ryan: Although you were younger than most of the original L.A. punk crowd, you were into glam rock years before punk hit.

Kid: I was precocious. I liked records since I was a baby. Before I could read, I would go through my sisters' record collections and pull out my favorite albums based on the colors and the designs of the labels.

Ryan: You had older sisters, correct?

Kid: Yeah. I'm the youngest in my family. My oldest sister is nine years older than me. That's a pretty big time span. I was a little kid in the mid-'60s.

Ryan: Being from La Puente (twenty miles East of L.A.), I imagine your sister was a fan of the music coming out of El Monte Legion Stadium.

Kid: She was. Some male cousins of mine who played in groups were into that music too. They were already teenagers then, going to dances. Their excitement about music had an influence on me. I didn't know what they were excited about, but I knew I wanted to do whatever it was they were doing.

Ryan: You went to New York when you were a teenager. Was the no wave scene happening yet?

Kid: The first time I went to New York was on a school trip in 1977. The original punk scene was still going on. I had coerced my family into letting me go. I told them I would graduate high school if they'd allow me to go on a school trip to Europe. On the way, we stopped over in New York.

Being the conman that I am, I took a GED test and got out of school early. [laughs] I still got to go on the trip. I wanted to see live music. I knew there were scenes going on in London and New York. I broke off from the tourist traps the school group went on and stopped off at record stores and music clubs. I convinced a friend of mine—she was a big Bowie fan—to go with me.

The two of us went to the Vortex Club in London. I saw The Slits. I remember seeing The Clash and Siouxsie Sioux hanging out. It was like I was in a magazine. [laughs] That trip was a revelation to me.

While in New York, I met up with some friends of mine. It was right when Elvis died (August 1977). We went to see The Heartbreakers at the Village Gate; Alex Chilton was the opening act. The entire audience at The Heartbreakers show left afterwards and walked over to CBGB's to see The Dead Boys play. There was a deep sense of community in New York. I haven't really felt it to that degree since. The fans built around The Ramones and Patti Smith were mobilizing. There was a transition going on from glam to punk.

I was doing a Ramones fanzine in Los Angeles. I met up with the New York branch of the club on that first trip. I built friendships that have endured till today. Punk wasn't some childish tomfoolery. Music was going to be a way of life for a lot of people.

Ryan: People were incredibly fervent at that time. Jeffrey (Lee Pierce of The Gun Club) was doing his Blondie fan club. You were also doing a newsletter for The Screamers.

Kid: Terry Graham was doing a Weirdos

fanzine. There was a lot going on. During the glam period, I'd go to Rodney's English Disco. I actually wrote a book that deals with this period. I was on the outer fringes of things. I spent more time in the back alley of Rodney's than inside it, drinking with the other underage kids. We'd get in, occasionally. I still have no idea how fourteen-year-olds got into a bar. I went to Rodney's because I had a passion for David Bowie, T. Rex, Iggy, and The Sweet. Rodney's was known for its groupie scene. Although groupies were young girls who wanted to sleep with musicians, they were totally devoted to music. It was all tied into their love of music.

David Bowie was a touchstone for a lot of kids. Glam was a complete alternative to everything else that was going on. Being bisexual became okay. Bisexual kids might be gay, they might not be. That was my ticket in. Darby Crash really latched on to the glam scene for that reason. We were slightly younger, but that made you cooler at Rodney's. You completely fit in there. It was a funny time. People were super naïve and gullible. But it was all incredibly glamorous.

People from *Back Door Man* were around then. Don Waller had a band called The Imperial Dogs that played at Rodney's. Rodney's and glam were important to punk. The people in the English punk scene will probably tell you the same thing. The first time I heard a Kraftwerk record was at a David Bowie *Diamond Dogs* concert. It was a great time to be a teenager. In hindsight, it's easy to see the trajectory from glam to punk.

Ryan: It's nice to hear you put a human face to the glam and punk scenes, Kid. Too often the transition is portrayed as very linear and clean.

Kid: Well wait until you read my book!

Ryan: Do you have a publisher lined up?

Kid: No. I have an editor. He's a friend of mine who's helping me work on it. I just sent him a draft. I've been mouthing off about this book for a while in the press. I've had a couple of small presses approach me with offers. So something will happen.

Ryan: That's fantastic. Alice Bag just put out a book (*Violence Girl*).

Kid: I know. I saw her when she was here in Washington DC. I played with her. She did a reading, too. Her book and the one I'm working on have some similarities. We're both from the same generation. But there are some differences. My book has a lot of vignettes and stories.

Ryan: Out of everyone Jeffrey Lee Pierce (1958-1996) worked with throughout his brief life, you seemed to be his best collaborator. You had a lot in common—a love of travelling and a similar interest in music.

Kid: We shared a lot in common. Some things became apparent to me only after he died and when I started writing about the period. Jeffrey and I both had sisters and no brothers. We both grew up one suburb away from another. We bonded over our love of music and willingness to travel to find it. Our entire lives ended up being marked by wanderlust. We were constantly moving around. Being in a band, you're always traveling on tour.

But Jeffrey and I would relocate, moving to different cities in the United States and different countries.

We were both adventurous with no fear of where our adventures would take us. We planted ourselves into scenes. I've never talked with musicians before about how they started out. But for me and Jeffrey—we just jumped into scenes with musicians. It started with hanging out on the fringes—going to Rodney's to see if Marc Bolan would show up. Then we built up record collections and started a fan club for a band. We just wanted to get into close proximity with music. We ended up becoming musicians. It certainly wasn't my intention.

I owe Jeffrey; he figured out that my best place in music would be as a musician. He convinced me to start playing guitar and to form a band with him. Jeffrey was more musical than me. He had taken the initiative to learn how to play music. We started The Creeping Ritual on the premise of, "Well, we've been around and seen a lot of things. We like certain elements of bands, but there's no one else doing things from our point of view."

We were influenced by New York more than Los Angeles. Although we loved X, The Suburban Lawns, and The Blasters, New York had a way of taking different elements of music—of people pulling from their respective environments—and putting a new life to music, of creating something a little bit different. Seeing James Chance and The Cramps was such a revelation. Now it's not such a big deal to see someone mix rockabilly with psychedelic music. But in the late-'70s, it was unheard of. There was no one like The Cramps. Maybe Suicide, but they were slightly different. The Cramps took two different forms of music and created a whole new world with it. It was a new language for music. It spoke to people and they wanted to learn what Lux and Ivy were doing.

Ryan: Although there wasn't a stylistic similarity, I can see where the ethos of DNA and James Chance influenced The Gun Club.

Kid: Yeah. It wasn't like James Chance was playing music like James Brown or Albert Ayler. However, you could tell that he liked both James Brown and Albert Ayler. James Chance took their music and did something completely nuts with it. He had an attitude that exuded discontent, yet his music was intoxicating at the same time.

Something similar happened with The Gun Club. The Gun Club was inspired by our discontent with life and music. Jeffrey decided not to copy the blues; he went for the essence of it instead. Jeffrey was really smart in that sense. Blending blues and punk made perfect sense. Jeffrey introduced that idea to people. He taught me how to play guitar in open E tuning. John Lee Hooker played like that. Jeffrey figured it would be easier for me to learn guitar in open tuning rather than having to form chords in standard tuning. It would also give us a blues sound. We started out making a weird and horrible racket. It eventually turned into something. The Gun Club was pretty horrible at the beginning. [laughs]

Ryan: I interviewed Paul Cutler a couple of months back and he said that his favorite version of The Gun Club was the first one, with Brad Dunning (drums) and Don Snowden (bass).

Kid: It was a weird lineup. Brad was another untaught musician. He was just a friend who was interested in playing drums. Don liked R&B and reggae. He was actually the most accomplished musician in the group. The fact that he could play at all made us think he was a master bassist.

Ryan: By simply knowing what he was doing, he was the James Jamerson of the group.

Kid: Exactly. The band was a real wreck. Someone like Paul Cutler, who has a real taste for the bizarre, might have found it interesting. [laughs] And it was interesting. We could tell that it was different. We thought we were the shit. Other people caught on too. Not a lot—it was mostly just friends at the beginning.

The Creeping Ritual sound had a reggae influence that disappeared when we got Rob (Ritter) and Terry (Graham) in the band and Don (Snowden) left. It's odd: I have the distinction of playing at the first Gun Club show and the last Gun Club show. And to be honest, they were both pretty similar. We just hung on by the seat of our pants, seeing how long we could keep playing without getting kicked off stage. Our influences were a little more modern at the very beginning of the band. Jeffrey was really into blues and soul in the early days. But he was also into Blondie. Reggae was a newer idea to us at the time, too. But the band was pretty terrible. I actually have or had some rehearsal tapes of the first lineup. They're absolutely terrifying.

Ryan: I wanted to ask if any recordings exist of the first lineup. The earliest Gun Club recordings I know of are the tracks on *The Birth, The Death, The Ghost* (an album released in 1984 of songs recorded live in Los Angeles in 1980).

Kid: Rob and Terry were in the band then.

Ryan: Right. But you had some tapes with Don and Brad on them?

Kid: I did and we were a complete mess. I think I still have them. I might have given them to (Gun Club Fan Club President) Gene Temesy.

Ryan: That's absolutely amazing, Kid. I want to hear those tapes.

Kid: More than anything, they'll show you that most bands start from nothing. [laughs] We came a long way. It was really jangly sounding and the band was really out of tune. I should try to find those tapes and listen to them again.

Ryan: Even if those tapes are a train wreck, it'd be great to hear them.

Kid: I'm not sure if the public needs to know about them. It might ruin Jeffrey's legacy. [laughs]

Ryan: You guys got two heavy musicians in Rob and Terry. Rob is one of my all-time favorite bass players.

Kid: Rob was amazing.

Ryan: How long did you play with Rob and Terry before joining The Cramps?

Kid: About a year. It's hard to judge that timeline because there's no press or records

IN HINDSIGHT,



Kid Congo Powers at the Jensen Rec Center MATT AVERAGE

IT'S EASY TO SEE THE TRAJECTORY FROM GLAM TO PUNK.





The Cramps, with Kid (far right), photo Courtesy of LARRY HARDY

Kid's first-ever L.A. show with the Cramps at the Roxy in 1981 LARRY HARDY



to base it on. I know I was gone by the end of 1980 because I recorded *Psychedelic Jungle* with The Cramps in December 1980. I recorded that album right after I joined them. I likely played with The Gun Club until mid or late 1980.

Ryan: That sounds about right. The Gun Club recorded *Fire of Love* with Ward (Dotson) in 1981.

Kid: Yeah. *Fire of Love* came out not too long after *Psychedelic Jungle*.

Ryan: Joining The Cramps had to have been a trial by fire.

Kid: I was a very basic guitarist at the time. My playing was very instinctual.

Ryan: You looked good on stage. The Cramps were a very visual band. They weren't going to let the guy down at the truck stop play for them.

Kid: I think that had something to do with it.

Ryan: Did Poison Ivy ever have you play in standard tuning?

Kid: No. I've never played in anything but open E.

Ryan: To this day, you stick strictly to open tunings?

Kid: Yeah. I sometimes play in open D and open G, but mostly I stick to open E. I find everything I need there.

Ryan: You were doing bass runs on the guitar—something you didn't do much of before—when you joined The Cramps. That must have been hard for you as a relatively inexperienced guitarist.

Kid: It was daunting and I had to do those runs in open E tuning. I couldn't rely on the patterns you use in standard tuning. Every line had to have a different pattern. But that's alright because that's how I learned how to play. I learned a lot about guitar playing in

The Cramps. It was not just about chords anymore. I was using sound as opposed to focusing on scales. I was playing a lot of fuzz guitar in the vein of a saxophone. I'd make my guitar squeal. *Psychedelic Jungle* was a very rhythmic and slow record. It was a sexy-sounding record. It wasn't fast rockabilly like a lot of The Cramps' other albums. I was so frightened. I knew I had to do something good. I was a huge Bryan Gregory fan. I had big shoes to fill. I had to figure out the essence of his guitar playing.

Ryan: I imagine it was frightening. Lux and Ivy were really intelligent. Lux had at least ten years on you. He'd been around.

Kid: I thought they were so old. I remember thinking, "Lux and Ivy are probably thirty!" [laughs] I was twenty-one at the time. No wonder they called me Kid.

Ryan: On a lot of early jazz records, guitarists tried to mimic piano players. Do you still think of your guitar as a saxophone?

Kid: I think of piano and saxophone a lot when I play. I'm also influenced by guitarists like Link Wray. He was good about emphasizing sound and rhythm as opposed to flash.

Ryan: Although you're from Los Angeles, your guitar playing always reminded me of the sound coming out of New York in the late-'70s and early-'80s.

Kid: That's an accurate connection. I was influenced by Pat Place from the Contortions and Lydia Lunch. With the exception of blues guitarists, they were the first slide guitarists that I knew about. They would swirl in and out of songs. When Jeffrey put a slide in my hand, he also had me listen to records. Although John Lee Hooker didn't use slide

a lot, when he did it was percussive. That influenced me. Bo Diddley did too. Robert Johnson, of course.

Jeffrey was all about "thinking things": "Let's play jazz." We didn't play jazz, but we'd try and run with it. I read an interview with Peter Case where he said, "Jeffrey would like all these musical genres and grab at them. He would never learn how to play them the way they were traditionally done, but he'd take the thought and attitude of the music and put it into his own work." Peter was right—especially about earlier Gun Club. Often Jeffrey's instruction was "think black" or "think jazz." That was the extent of it.

Ryan: That's very much in the vein of Captain Beefheart: "Play harder but softer."

Kid: Exactly.

Ryan: Were you surprised by the success The Gun Club experienced while you were in The Cramps?

Kid: Not at all. I saw them with Ward Dotson before they recorded and I thought they were great. It was good for me to see them from the outside. Even when I was still in the band—right after Rob and Terry joined—we were getting good. Eighty percent of the songs on *Fire of Love* predate Ward joining the band. When I heard they were looking to record, I didn't know how the album would turn out. Then I heard Chris D. was going to be the producer. That was a good decision. *Fire of Love* is an immediate record. The minute you first hear it you know it's something great. You can play that record now for someone who's never heard it, and they'd tell you the same thing.

One thing Jeffrey told me—he probably told Lux and Ivy the same thing—was,

BUT FOR ME AND JEFFREY—WE JUST JUMPED INTO SCENES WITH MUSICIANS.

IT STARTED WITH HANGING OUT ON THE FRINGES —GOING TO RODNEY'S TO SEE IF MARC BOLAN WOULD SHOW UP.



“Okay, you can join The Cramps. But you’ve got to get The Gun Club gigs.” The Cramps and The Gun Club ended up doing a lot of shows together. The association with The Cramps was good for The Gun Club.

Ryan: You rejoined The Gun Club at the beginning of a 1984 Australian tour. What was your interpretation of the band at that point?

Kid: Jeffrey and I were hanging out a lot at the time. We were into the Beats—Ginsberg and Burroughs. We were heavily into jazz. We were becoming friends with people like Nick Cave. It was a pretty druggy time. We were taking a lot of hard drugs. But we were taking them in a way that was working for us. Later on it didn’t serve us so well.

It’s pretty romantic—identifying with our junkie heroes like Lenny Bruce, Burroughs, and jazz musicians. It was a little stupid for two people in their mid- to late-twenties. But we were music fans. I don’t make any apologies for any of that. We were moving into a darker period. The first album (*Fire of Love*) had a little bit of anger and spite to it. By the time of *The Las Vegas Story* (1984), that had turned into disgust. Jeffrey was disgusted by what was going on in the United States. Listen to “Bad America.” Our opinions were becoming more of our own. The Gun Club around the time of *Las Vegas Story* was becoming more of an extension of Jeffrey’s personality. We started out with a lot more obvious influences. Jeffrey sort of adopted the role of a character at the beginning. By 1984 Jeffrey was being Jeffrey.

Ryan: He was no longer the preacher stomping on a bible.

Kid: Exactly. That was a character Jeffrey used. I’m not saying that wasn’t him, but it was

something he could access that was dramatic. It wasn’t a bad thing. Drama tells a story.

The way I rejoined The Gun Club was quite accidental. Jeffrey’s band quit right before an Australian tour, so he asked me to fill in. I had just left The Cramps. My time had come to an end; they were in a state of flux. I told Jeffrey, “Sure, I’ll play. I’m not doing anything. I’m just sitting here on Western and Sunset.”

I was actually going to start working on a solo record then. Jeffrey was going to help me with it. I did that Gun Club tour with a couple Australian musicians: Spencer Jones and Billy Pommer. Patricia (Morrison) was on bass. That was the first time I played with her. Jeffrey and Patricia already had some of the songs for *The Las Vegas Story*. “Moonlight Motel” was one of them.

When we got back to the U.S., I thought, “Well, why don’t I just join The Gun Club again?” For reasons unknown to me, Terry (Graham) ended up back in the band. Being a good drummer outweighed any personal issues, I guess. Jeffrey started playing guitar again, so we had two guitarists on stage. It worked out well. I think the mixing of our styles always worked. We put a lot of effort into that record. Working with (producer) Jeff Eyrich ended up being a good thing.

Ryan: You mentioned a solo record that never came to light. Did those songs eventually turn up on *The Fur Bible* record (1985)?

Kid: No. *Fur Bible* was music that was kicked out of a hat. My one regret with that project is that it wasn’t well thought out. The Gun Club broke up in late- ‘84. Patricia and I thought, “Well, what are we going to do?” Originally, we were going to have Tex Perkins (Beasts

Of Bourbon) sing for us. But that didn’t work out because of visa problems. We played with Tex a few times. Somehow, I was forced into being the singer. I wasn’t really prepared for it.

In hindsight, I like the recordings now. When the record came out, I didn’t. For years, *The Fur Bible* EP was my one spot of shame. I didn’t listen to it for twelve years. But then people would periodically approach me at shows, telling me how much they liked it. A few people even asked me to sign their copies. I thought, “What’s going on?” I’d say to them, “That record is pretty bad.” And people would assure me, “No. It’s great! I love it. Are there any more albums?” So I finally listened to it again and it wasn’t that bad. Looking back, that was a really rough time for me. I might have been associating those memories with the record. The record was a little too gothic-sounding for me, especially at the time.

Ryan: Did Patricia’s influence give the record a more gothic sound?

Kid: Maybe. I also thought people would like a more gothic-sounding record. Of course, making music to meet the expectations of others is the absolute wrong thing to do. [laughs] *The Fur Bible* record was recorded during Reagan’s time in America. That’s actually where my memoir ends. It starts from my childhood and runs till Reagan’s reelection. That was a horrible period to be in the United States.

Jeffrey and I were not fond of nationalism. We couldn’t understand it. Bands were playing with American flags behind them on stage. The Gun Club was always a loner band. We played with the same people a lot—we were

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Kid Congo Powers And The Pink Monkey Birds, Courtesy of LARRY HARDY

I'LL GO TO MY GRAVE HAPPY.



friends with bands—but we were always sort of on our own. In Los Angeles, we were never really that popular—before or after *Fire of Love*. In 1984, we played The Music Machine in L.A. There were about fifty to eighty people there. We would play to two thousand people in London. Low popularity in Los Angeles and Reagan were the major reasons why we moved to London.

Ryan: The mid- to late-'80s was an incredible time period for you. You cut *Mother Juno* (1987) with The Gun Club—one of their best records—and started playing with Nick Cave.

Kid: Yeah. I had moved to Berlin.

Ryan: While living in Berlin, you appeared in the Wim Wenders movie *Wings of Desire* (1987). The film is a high-water mark of late twentieth century cinema. What was the experience like?

Kid: There was a lot of waiting around. [laughs] It was great for me. I was new in The Bad Seeds. Participating in the film was one of the first things I did with the band. We played a couple of shows and then recorded "From Her to Eternity" for the movie. It was sort of a live version of the song. We recorded it at the legendary Hansa Studios in Berlin.

Wim Wenders was a great guy. He's very much like his films: slow moving. In his movies he scans; there's a lot of panning. That's how he is in person. He's very observant. Wenders was also a music fan. He saw what was happening in Berlin with Nick Cave and Crime And The City Solution. That's why we ended up being in the film. Wim had spent time in Los Angeles. While we were working on the movie, he told me

how much he loved The Gun Club and that he'd seen them at Club Lingerie.

I fell in love with Berlin immediately. That's why I moved there. Obviously, it worked out well for work too. I ended up playing in The Bad Seeds for a couple of years. I was sick of living in the U.K. Culturally, the U.K. wasn't my scene. The class system there was too much for me. In Berlin, I could unbutton my shirt. People were casual and freer there. There was also a community of artists in Berlin. It was actually West Berlin at the time.

The arts community was united: dance, theater, music, and visual art. Everyone hung out together and collaborated with one another. The Goethe-Institut was very supportive of the arts, so people would get funding for their projects. That's how a film like *Wings of Desire* got made. It reflected the time period. It showed not only Berlin as a divided city, but also captures the spirit of West Berlin's artistic community as well. It was an amazing film. I'm incredibly proud to have taken part in it. I'll go to my grave happy.

Ryan: Recording with Nick Cave must have been another challenge. Unlike all of the other projects you'd been involved in, Nick Cave does not have a guitar-driven sound.

Kid: No he doesn't.

Ryan: Cave employs odd time signatures and often composes on the piano. There's also a real emphasis on dynamics in his music—especially the vocals.

Kid: It was a lot more difficult than I thought it was going to be. It took me a while to get into it. Luckily The Bad Seeds at the time

were very free and experimental. There was a lot of room to find out what to add to each song. It was eye-opening for me.

Then again, every project was a learning experience for me. Even rejoining The Gun Club allowed me to learn something new. I often refer to my time in Berlin as the period where I grew up. Before The Bad Seeds, everything I did centered on some form of rock. I knew Nick Cave, but I mostly hung around Mick Harvey. He was the musical director of the group. I learned how to work with a singer in The Bad Seeds. I had to add accents to music.

Nick Cave and Mick Harvey pick people who have some sort of unconventional way of playing. They found that quality more attractive than musicianship. They wanted players with their own voice. Nick and Mick were good teachers. If you're going to learn, learn from the best. [laughs] I felt like a student in the band.

After The Bad Seeds, I still considered myself a student. But I wasn't *solely* a student anymore. I had learned so much. In The Gun Club, I had a say in where the band would go. I was there at the beginning. The Cramps was Lux and Ivy's vision. I got to partake in it, but Lux and Ivy had the final word. It was the same thing with The Bad Seeds. It wasn't my project. I was glad to be included in it and to have played a part, but that was Nick and Mick's project. The experience of being in The Bad Seeds helped me become more well-rounded as a musician. After I left I had the self-confidence needed to start my own projects.

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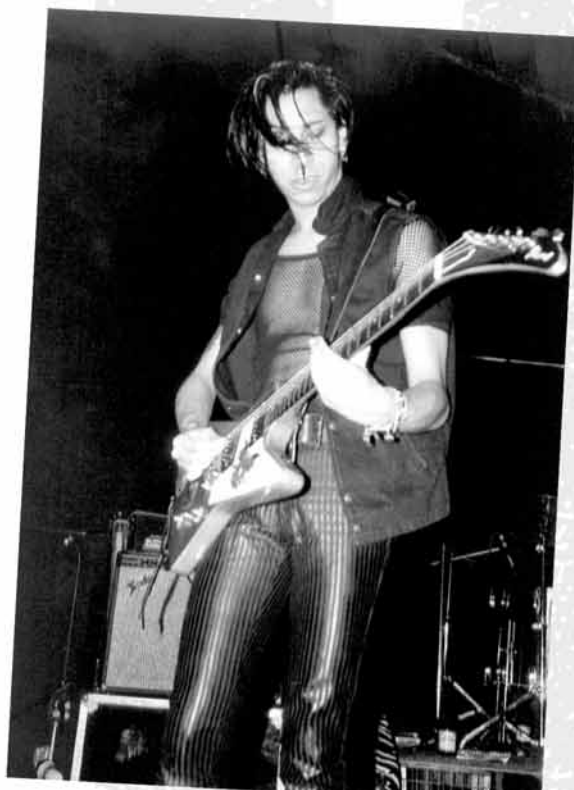
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Kid at the Cuckoos Nest, circa 83. LARRY HARDY

Nick and Mick would have the root of a song ready. They'd then typically say, "Okay, you do what you do." It was very vague in that way. Nick and Mick wanted you to be yourself. I learned a lot of weird stuff about guitar playing from Blixa (Bargeld). He played a lot of slide guitar, too. Our styles were incredibly similar in some ways. That's probably why I ended up leaving. I doubt they needed two noisy guitar players. It worked well for the time I was in the band, though.

Ryan: While in The Bad Seeds you were also playing with The Gun Club. The *Mother Juno* lineup—you, Jeffrey, Romi Mori (bass) and Nick Sanderson (drums)—was possibly the best. Certainly it's the most overlooked. Romi and Nick formed an incredible rhythm section.

Kid: They were great. That was the strongest Gun Club lineup. It was a great rock outfit. The lineup with Patricia and Terry (*The Las Vegas Story* period) was magical in many ways—we were playing in a very intuitive manner—but we often had really bad shows. There were some great shows where we took off, but a lot of the bad *Las Vegas Story* shows had to do with whatever Jeffrey was taking. The lineup with Romi and Nick was a well-oiled machine. It didn't matter what Jeffrey was doing: the band still held it together. It became a very dependable group. I look back on that lineup with a lot of affection.

Ryan: The next record, *Pastoral Hide and Seek* (1990), was another really strong outing.

Kid: I never know what to think of that album. **Ryan:** It has some of Jeffrey's best songs. "I Hear Your Heart Singing" is incredible.

Kid: The title track is great, too. I'll have to revisit it.

Ryan: Romi told me Jeffrey was really bottoming out at that time. I was surprised to hear that because the record's so amazing.

Kid: That's true. The record may be good but my memories of making it probably color my views on it. It was a mess. It was amazing that Jeffrey could be such a wreck, yet write these great songs. He collaborated with Romi on that material. They were a couple, so they played together a lot. I really love the *Divinity* EP (1991). "Sorrows Knows" and "Richard Speck" are great songs. I really like The Urinals cover "Black Hole."

Looking back, I was growing disinterested in The Gun Club. I went through a period of getting cleaned up, so I distanced myself from Jeffrey a little bit. I was also still living in Berlin and Jeffrey was in the U.K. It was a weird time. I actually might have moved back to the United States around the time of the *Divinity* EP.

Ryan: You formed Congo Norvell in Los Angeles just after your time with The Gun Club.

Kid: That's right. I was likely back in the U.S. by that time. Sally Norvell and I cut this great record, *The Dope, The Lies, The Vaseline*. The record company in Los Angeles wouldn't put it out and they wouldn't sell it back to us, so we decided to move to New York.

We did make another record, but that experience in Los Angeles was the death of the city for me. I couldn't take record company bullshit. Congo Norvell was one of the only times in my career where I played the game. Sally and I decided, "Okay, we'll get a record label and a producer. We'll produce the record the way the Los Angeles-based recording industry says. Then get the album on the radio." We did everything they wanted. It was a great record. Promos were sent out. The album was getting great reviews, but then the label said, "We're not releasing it. And you can't buy it back." It languishes to this day in the vaults. In New York, I formed The Knoxville Girls.

Ryan: The first Knoxville Girls LP (Self-titled, 1999) is amazing.

Kid: I love that first record. That was another project that just happened. Jerry Teel had all of these songs; he asked me to play on them. A lot of people liked the band. We were pretty shocked by the reception we got. Even Lux and Ivy liked it. [laughs]

Ryan: What inspired you to start writing songs for your recent solo project, Kid Congo Powers And The Pink Monkey Birds?

Kid: I think there was no other choice. Congo Norvell was a door for the solo records. I'd write songs for Sally to sing in the group. I was beginning to be more of a musical director. I had done some guest vocals for Die Haut back in Berlin. I had also done an EP with Robin Guthrie, Marcia Schofield, and Barry Adamson called *In the Heat of the Night* (1989). I'd been doing things here and there. And as far back as *The Las Vegas Story*, I'd been planning to do a solo record. It seemed natural to do some solo recordings. It just took a while to build up the confidence.

Ryan: You've been known as a sideman for so long; your recent recordings have been a really pleasant surprise. They're exceptional. The lyrics are mostly autobiographical.

Kid: All the text is from my book. It's all cut up.

Ryan: The inspiration for your lyrics coming from your memoirs makes sense. Even the choice of covers, like Thee Midnitters' "I Found a Peanut" go back to East L.A.

Kid: The book really informed my recent work. That also applies to the music. The enthusiasm I felt as a child—hearing about my older sisters and cousins going to see Thee Midnitters—influences the songs I'm writing now.

Ryan: Your narratives are great. "Our Other World" has an engaging and humorous story about Rick James visiting the record store you worked at as a teenager.

Kid: The first Pink Monkey Birds record was an extension of The Knoxville Girls. It was with a New York band. That record was about my love of New York music.

Ryan: You were doing some electronic projects at the time.

Kid: I did a bunch of stuff with Khan. And I still love electronic music. But with the material I had written—plus the feel of the new band that's been with me for six years now—it makes sense that the records sound the way they do.

The Cramps have also had a big influence on the new material. I hadn't seen The Cramps or spoken with Lux and Ivy for a lot of years. On the last tour they did in 2006, I saw them in New York. I was blown away. It was like the first time I had seen them. It was so incredible and so basic. Lux and Ivy were just so free. That's where the magic came from with them. The songs were great. But it was them being themselves that hit me. We met up after the show and it was great. It was a real epiphany for me. I was writing about Los Angeles; I should have my songs reflect who I am and what I've done. That's stuck with me ever since. Just be yourself and don't be embarrassed about it.

Ryan: I'm really pleased to hear that you're working hard on your solo albums. It's great seeing you assert yourself with the Pink Monkey Birds. It's a nice chapter in your illustrious career.

Kid: Thanks a lot. I think the war is finally over. I can just make records that I want to make now. Being comfortable with releasing records on my own has been a long road. I'm glad that it happened. It doesn't happen for everyone.

Concise Kid Congo Powers Timeline

Creeping Ritual/Gun Club: 1979-late 1980;

1984; 1986-1992; 1995

Cramps: Late 1980-1983

Fur Bible: 1985

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds: 1986-1990

Congo Norvell: 1990-1998

Knoxville Girls: 1998-2001

Kid/Khan/Julee Cruise: 2001-present

Pink Monkey Birds: 2001-present



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1977 and 1982 are now distant planets. In 2012, dystopian colonies of once-unimpeachable bands roam in packs. Button-, patch-, and flap-encrusted nostalgists brandish precious, fragile petroleum discs. Impressionable urchins chit chat and keyboard clack with mockingbird clarity. "No good new punk exists!" is their rallying cry. "It can't! Horde the sound of time!"

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It's a sad state of affairs on these post-apocalypse punk planets where accountants and lawyers fight over royalties. Tattered black banners sag in the rubble. The charred remains of a primitive society continue stabbing each other for scraps. The once-mighty Dead Kennedys freighter is smashed up on the rocks, rusting in the bay. Velcro hair attachments now fasten Misfits devil locks in place.

Fresh perspectives are as important as new technology.

The Night Birds—I won't say they're the antidote or the saviors. They're a contemporary punk band that soars in the upper atmosphere, into a dawning horizon while embodying the darkening night of the past.

CA-CAW! MOTHERFUCKER. CA-CAW!

Todd: So, nicknames. Who's Catfish?

Ryan: That's me.

Todd: How'd you get the name Catfish?

Ryan: On our first tour, right?

Joe: We were driving to The Fest and we got a shit ball motel. It was one of those deals where we obviously lied about how many people there were so we had to stew in the back. And we got caught on the way up.

Ryan: For the first time ever.

Joe: The woman was like, "You said there was only two!"

Ryan: She saw that we had Alex (Grave Mistake) in there and I was like, "No, he was just visiting."

Joe: "He's visiting our hotel." We came in the room and I was like, "we should start calling Ryan 'Catfish.'"

Todd: Why?

Joe: Because he eats everything and he sleeps on the floor. He's a bottom feeder.

Ryan: It's true.

Joe: It didn't stick that long.

Ryan: It did for a while, actually.

Todd: Who's Party Machine?

Joe: Ryan.

Ryan: I guess.

Joe: Although I don't think I've actually heard that. Did we coin that?

Todd: No.

Joe: Are you just asking who is *the* Party Machine?

Todd: Someone was nicknamed Party Machine. That's from our extensive research.

Joe: Your source says.

Todd: I actually made a zine of all the research I did for you guys. Want to see it? [shows them the zine]

Joe: What is that?

Todd: This is the research I've done on The Night Birds.

Joe: Are you serious?

Todd: We'll be talking about this later on. I'll give it to you later if you want it.

Joe: You guys are twisted, man. That's crazy.

Matt: We have other people do it—the Razorcake Street Team.

Todd: The Street Team or Malaysian Workers, one of the two.

Joe: Do people still use the word street team? I'm serious! Do they? I remember in punk it was a big thing. People were like, "They have a street team. That's fucking stupid."

Matt: I can remember shitty little mid-level, well, even small opening-type bands. They'd have street teams promoting themselves in the early 2000s. I'd get emails because I was doing shows at the time and they'd say, "Hey, we'll give you CDs if you can get some kids to hand these out." It's like, "That's okay, man. We're cool."

Joe: I remember that era.

Todd: What do each one of you guys do for a job?

Joe: I'm an electrical engineer. I design electronics. I design fire alarm strobes. That's what I do.

Todd: The strobes?

Joe: Not the smoke detector devices you'd put in your house. It's different for any type of public building. There's a metal box in the basement somewhere that's like the fire alarm control panel and then there are separate smoke detectors.

Matt: I used to install those.

Joe: The company I work for used to be called Wheel Lock. I don't know if you worked with any of their things.

Matt: Possibly. But I remember spending a good two to three years of my life installing fire strobes.

Joe: Up on a ladder, eight inches off the wall.

Matt: Covered in fiberglass. One thing we had to do that I did not feel good about was you had to have a pass to go to and from the bathrooms.

Joe: Really?

Matt: I think it was a way to monitor if you're fucking off on the job. I was the guy who would go sleep in the closet whenever I was supposed to be laying the cable. I would sleep in the closet for a little bit, so fire me.

Brian: These are the people you have working for you here. They're sleeping in the closet.

Todd: [laughs] We don't pay anybody. Bryan?

Brian: I work for a family business called Gorseigner Brother's Hardwood Floors. I used to sand and refinish hardwood floors. I've made my way into the office and now I book appointments and do a lot of customer service stuff. That's it.

Todd: What's the Lacy Act?

Brian: The Lazy Act?

Todd: L-A-C-Y Act. The Lacy Act.

Brian: I don't know.

Todd: That's on your website.

Brian: On the Gorseigner Brother's website?

Todd: Yes, it is.

Brian: Fuck... Well, I didn't create the website.

Todd: Apparently it had a lot of buzz when it was released.

Brian: The Lacy Act? Oh, man.

Joe: Your cousin is going to be so mad.

Brian: I'm glad my boss isn't going to read this.

Todd: It's something about sustainable forests. I thought you'd be pretty up on that; apparently not.

Brian: No, to be honest I just update our Twitter. Stuff like that. My hands-on knowledge isn't all that good.

Todd: Alright, PJ, what do you do?

A black and white photograph of a man with short, dark hair, wearing a plaid shirt over a white t-shirt. He is captured in a dynamic pose, leaning forward and singing passionately into a handheld microphone. His mouth is wide open, and his eyes are focused on the microphone. The background is dark and out of focus. The word "NIGHT" is printed in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters, tilted diagonally across the upper left portion of the image. The word "BIRDS" is printed in similar large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters, tilted diagonally across the lower right portion of the image.

NIGHT

BIRDS

Joe: Bass
Brian: Singer
PJ: Guitar
Ryan: Drums

Interview: Todd Taylor, Matt Average
Introduction and layout: Todd Taylor
Photos: Matt Average
Bird: Keith Rosson
Transcription: Sean Arenas, Matthew Hart



There's going to be three dollars
and people are still going to f—
because th

PJ: I work for a food delivery company based out of central New Jersey. It's called DeliveryNow.com. We deliver for restaurants that don't otherwise deliver their food, usually higher-end restaurants. I started off as a driver in the Union County area. We have three dispatch centers: Union County, Essex County, and Somerset County. I worked my way into the office. I dispatch now. That pretty much means I just make sure that drivers are doing what they're supposed to be doing and I make sure that the restaurants have our orders. Pretty run of the mill stuff.

Ryan: I do food delivery on a bike in Brooklyn for about four different restaurants simultaneously. It's about five or six days a week.

Todd: Nice. So how does that apply or not apply to being in the Night Birds? Do you find any overlap or is it just something you do? What's the higher priority?

Ryan: Everybody in my line of work is either in a band or doing something like that. So it's really easy for me to get time off for tours.

PJ: One girl in the office goes to school. Everybody else who works for the company, that's their fulltime job. When I did the interview, the owner of the company and I

spent most of the interview talking about punk—so I was pretty much like, "I definitely have this job." He pretty much lives and breathes for the job. For me, I like to keep my job very separate from my personal life. The two are completely different entities. At least I try to keep it that way.

Brian: Like I said, I work for my family. I've been touring since I was like sixteen. I'm twenty-eight now so it was no surprise when I went back to work for my old man that that was going to happen.

Todd: Right, as one of the possibilities.

Brian: As I'm getting older, I'm touring less but they don't care. I'm smart about it. We book our tours so far in advance and we give so much notice. I mean we are completely anal about how far for that purpose so that me and Joe can give our bosses six months ahead of time. We're doing that little tour in Hawaii tomorrow that was booked thirteen months ago. We're good to our words with our tours.

Joe: Along those lines too, I think that's just in general; that's always a question. Some jobs it's hard to get time off or you think it's hard to get time off to go tour. But, generally, if you can let your employer know six to eight months in advance then they're usually

like, "Okay. Let me see about it." Before I had this job, I was working in a warehouse and I had a tour coming up. I let them know so far in advance they figured something out. "Okay, we'll let you go. You won't actually be working here anymore, but we will hire you right back when you come back." They could've just not made good on that and I wouldn't have had a job, but they did because I let them know so far in advance.

Todd: It's almost kind of like when people plan that far ahead for vacations or a wedding.

Joe: The only thing is if you're on the East Coast and you're going to do a full U.S. tour, then unless you're a madman and you want to do it in three weeks—which is even pushing it for a normal vacation—I need four to six weeks off.

Brian: Which we've never done and we never will.

Joe: But you've done that in the past.

Brian: When I was younger, sure.

Joe: People just have it in their heads that they can't do that if you have a "real" job or a "serious" job. You can usually finesse something, I think.

PJ: It's like one of those things where literally anybody can do this. That's always going to



dollar shows
to fucking complain,
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If we got paid in Tic-Tacs that would rule. I just ran out.

be the case. Anybody can do what we're doing or whatever any other band is doing.

Todd: But you're doing something very rare and I'll tell you what it is: Planning ahead. That's a good way to do it.

Brian: We're on a mission.

PJ: We're on a mission from god.

Matt: How'd you plan Hawaii? That seems like an unusual location for punk bands to go.

Brian: There's a fest called No Suck Fest and they did it last year. They've done it the past couple of years, but I think last year was the first year that they brought mainland bands over. They brought The Mean Jeans and The Dopamines and they had asked us if we could come last year, but we had a ton of money in our European plane tickets and we couldn't really afford to go over. We pretty much said, "If the offer is still on the table for next year, we'd love to come. That sounds incredible." We set up a West Coast tour around that. We flew in and did a week in L.A. Now we're going to fly to Hawaii, then we fly to Seattle. We'll go up to Vancouver and Victoria, play Portland, and then we fly home out of the Bay Area. If you plan far ahead and you're not complete idiots you can do it in such a way....

Todd: Two huge hurdles.

Brian: Two huge hurdles. Don't get me wrong. [Laughs]

Joe: We're idiots about other things. It'll become apparent by the end of this interview. There's plenty of stupidity. But about planning things, we're decent about that.

Brian: We take a lot of pride in that.

Matt: Do you think it's feasible at all for hardcore or even punk bands in general, or any band that's not backed by a major label, to do an entire U.S. tour?

Brian: The unfortunate thing about not doing that is you obviously miss a lot of cool towns. There will never be a point, unfortunately, where we play Albuquerque.

Joe: Or Las Cruces.

Brian: There's cool towns but with our jobs and I'm married; we're all getting a little bit older. We do a lot of two weeks where we will go out to the Midwest and our furthest destination will be Minneapolis. We'll play cities on the way out there and we'll come back. Or we will fly to the West Coast or we will fly to Europe or we'll fly to Texas for a festival or something like that. So we kind of know ahead of time that it sucks that there are a ton of places we'll probably never get to

play. That's just kind of the way it is.

Joe: But that's just us. I think other bands can do that.

Brian: Do you mean financially?

Matt: Yeah, as being financially feasible.

Brian: Again, it's all the way that you plan things. If you put out your record and you promote your record but you don't book the tour ahead of time, you end up going on a tour where your fucking album is not going to be out because you mis-planned things. And there's enough interest to see your band, sure. But I think there are a lot of bands that tour very incorrectly.

Matt: That could also be the promoter's job, too.

Brian: Could be, but you have to know who to look for. That's another thing.

Joe: I think part of it, too, is expectations. If you just want to make ends meet on the road then you can book a tour. But if you're looking to not sublet your apartment while you're gone and send money back home to your significant other...

Brian: To not wash dishes at Denny's on your day off.

Joe: I think it's still viable. I haven't done one of those tours since 2008.



Brian: I think it was easier then. Gas was cheaper. That is a huge factor.

Matt: That's why I wonder—there are punk venues that want to keep the door at five bucks. It's no longer a 1984 economy. It's 2012 and gas prices are no longer ninety cents or whatever.

Brian: I think that's a huge problem. "Okay, a touring band is coming, the show is going to be ten dollars, and nobody who comes to the show is going to complain about it." Because you know what? There's going to be three dollar shows and people are still going to fucking complain, because they're wieners. For whatever fucking reason they'll show up with a 40oz and be like, "I gotta pay for this show?!" then give you a handful of quarters. Get the fuck out of here. That's not the fucking way it works. We're not nine-year-olds. We're adults.

Joe: It's admirable that that's become a cultural thing in punk: you have to keep the price at five dollars. You have to keep the price low. That's a good value to have instilled in everyone.

PJ: It makes it so kids without jobs can still go to shows and that's kind of the lifeblood.

Joe: But now I think it's getting to the point where it's just hurting the bands so much.

Brian: There needs to be a middle ground somewhere.

Joe: Especially if you're going to one of the Western states and you got an eight-hour drive every day.

Brian: And then you have the almighty donation show where at the end of the night they hand you a pack of Chiclets and some Tic-Tacs and some guitars picks. And you're like, "Okay, cool, we'll drive another five hundred miles on this. This will get us really far."

PJ: If we got paid in Tic-Tacs that would rule. I just ran out. [Laughs]

Brian: I mean if you're young and you're just starting to book shows, maybe you don't know. Maybe it's something that you catch on to eventually. And you know what, I think a lot of bands, including us, if somebody at the end of the night pays us in that, we're not the kind of guys who are going to be like, "Fuck you. We need actual money to put gas in our tank."

Joe: We just won't come back.

Matt: Just ask them if they have an ATM card and take them to the ATM machine.

Brian: The fact of the matter is we're not going to do that. I also try to ask when we're booking a tour. Say, "It would be cool if you could charge this or this." We know we're not going to come out of the end of this tour with all of us making money. All we're trying to do is get from point A to point B not on our dime. If we can do that, we've succeeded.

Matt: I'm not asking if you're trying to make money, I don't care.

Brian: I mean we are. We're trying to make a lot. [Laughs]

Matt: Any endeavor in the punk rock world is just to have your expenses covered and if you made a little bit of profit, then wow.

Brian: Or a car from Scion or something.

PJ: Some free Vans sneakers. [Laughs]

Todd: Do you guys have fantastic bladder control?

Brian: Our bladder control is way better than my bowel control.

PJ: I pride myself on my bowel control, actually. I held in a poop for the entire plane ride out to California. That was pretty impressive. I was pretty impressed with myself.

Todd: If I'm mistaken, let me know. Is there a "no peeing in bottles in the van" rule?

Joe: In our van, yes.

Ryan: We pee on the side of the road a lot though.

Todd: I can flag and we can pull over type of thing.

Joe: Because it's my van, I've always had that rule that you can't pee in a bottle, inevitably it will fall over and I'll have to clean it up. I just don't want to clean up pee. [Laughs]

Todd: Fascist.

Joe: I'll stop at anytime. I'll pull over to the side of the road whenever somebody wants to pee. If you think about it, how many bands were not allowed to play a show because they were late by two minutes. If all you're doing is stopping to pee, that

doesn't mean anything either way. You're not gaining anything by pissing into a cup.

PJ: It's funny.

Joe: It's funny. And if you're lazy and you don't want to stop and you don't care if there's piss in your van, it's fine. It doesn't make a real difference.

Brian: A little off track, but remember when our very good friend, Darick Sater—he plays in a band called Deep Sleep and filled in on drums for us for a little bit—and he was really into chew. There ended up being a cup of chew spit that was in the back and I remember Joe really aggressively grabbing the cup to throw it away, not realizing it was full tobacco-y hot spit. It ended up getting all over Joe's arm. It was funny for us, not for Joe. [Laughs]

Brian: But that could have very easily been urine.

Ryan: That's worse than urine.

Joe: I should have put a "no chew" rule in there too, but he found the loophole.

Todd: In the van, you have a coffin?

Brian: It's not so much a coffin as it is a hole, as we prefer to call it.

Todd: Define the hole.

Joe: Most bands have a loft, which someone once told me they referred to as a clown canon because it's unsafe. I don't think it's safe to have that. [Laughs]

PJ: The hole is not much safer.

Joe: I believe it is a little bit safer. Instead of building a loft in my van, we have the two front seats, driver/passenger. Then we have a bench and then behind that I built a little wooden L and we put bedding in it.

PJ: It looks exactly like one of those shantytown cubby holes in the homeless shelter in that movie *Videodrome*.

Todd: It's like a Hooverville. Nice.

Joe: That's our answer to the loft: the hole.

Todd: Do your parents support what you do? You said you were twenty-eight; are they saying, "You need to fucking grow up," or "I don't like what you're doing, but I support you because I love you as a child"?

Brian: My parents have always been really cool with me being in bands. I mean, my mom has never seen the cover of the *Midnight Movies 7*" and we'll keep it that way.

Todd: Which Mike Diana illustrated?

Brian: Correct. My parents have always been really cool about it. We have jobs; we're not complete and total fuckups.

PJ: Speak for yourself. [Laughs]

Joe: As far as I'm concerned, what I do in my free time, they don't care.

PJ: My mom absolutely hates punk. She can't stand the music that I play. Well, she actually kind of likes Night Birds. She's like, "This is kind of catchy. This is pretty good." I used to just do hardcore bands and she'd say, "Oh, why do you have to be so angry all the time?"

Joe: Well, she likes that you get to see the world, right?

PJ: Don't get me wrong, she totally supports me getting out and doing stuff I like to do. I feel like any parent would who isn't a terrible person.

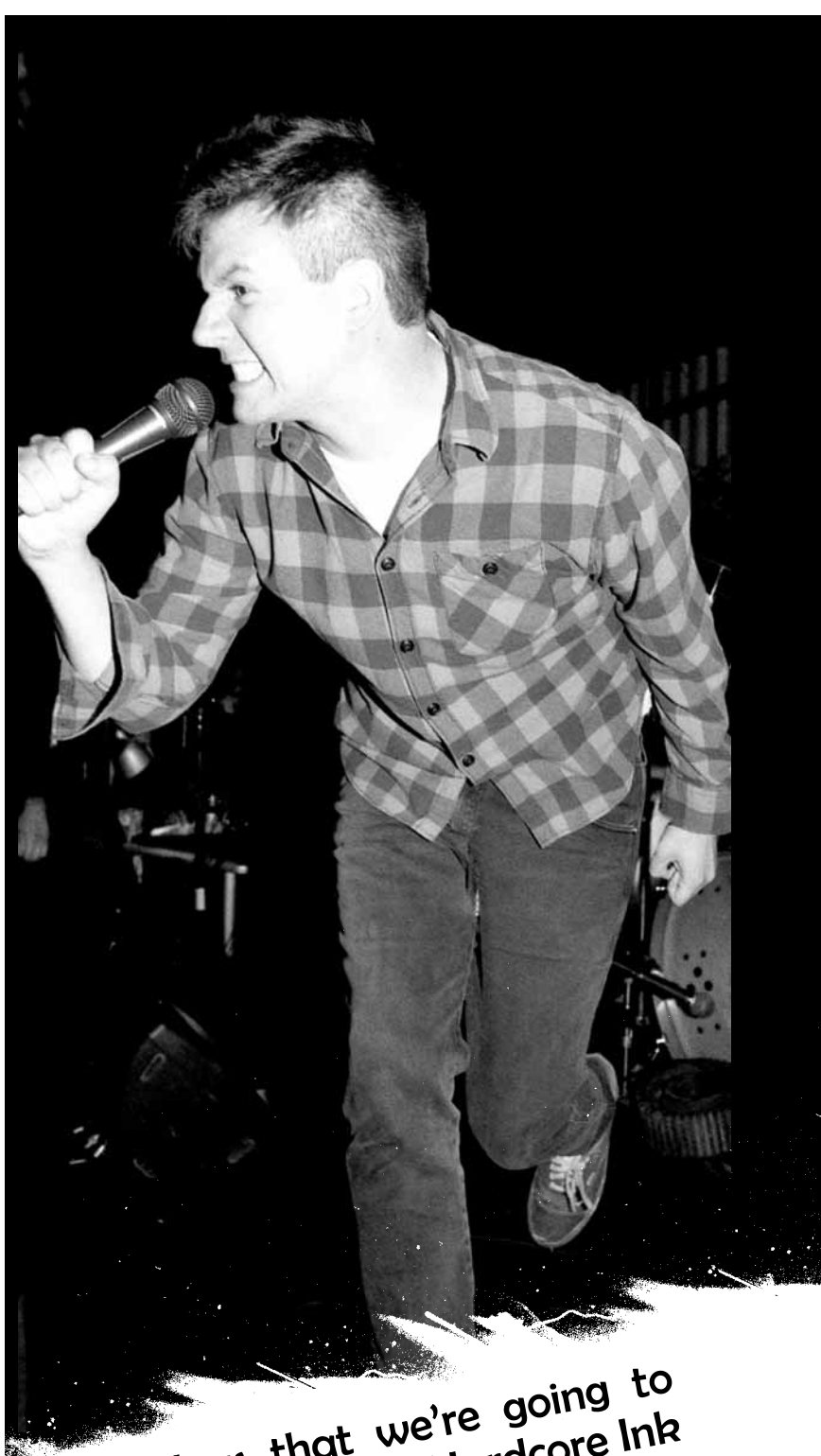
Ryan: That's why when I was going to Europe, my dad asked if I was still playing the screaming shit. [Laughs]

Joe: My parents don't like any of the music I've ever done. I think at one point I had an engineering job and I quit it to do a ten-week tour with The Ergs! Then they were like, "What are you doing? You should clearly be done with this by now."

Todd: "Get it out of your system."

Joe: I'm not going to live with that regret for my whole life of not going on a ten-week tour. Of course I'm going to do that. But at this point, I have it worked out with my job where I'm almost like a temp. I don't get benefits and stuff, but they allow me to go on tour for X number of weeks a year. My parent's are cool with that, but they don't like the music I play—at all. [Laughs] I'm fine with that. They're like, "Yeah, we don't like that."

Brian: It's because we have that parental advisory right on the front to try to deter all the parents.



They tell us that we're going to
legendary New York Hardcore Ink
where we're going to get
tattooed by Vinnie Stigma of
"Acoustic Front."

Matt: Are you guys aware that there are other bands called Night Birds?

PJ: There was a '60s freak beat kind of band, which was actually really good.

Joe: There was also a band of kids that were just starting off.

Matt: There's also a German band. They didn't post their music. It's just two men. There's also a "Latin jazz" band.

Joe: Wait, that's us. We are the Latin jazz Night Birds.

PJ: That's what we're going for. That's not what it sounds like? Ah, never mind.

Todd: Two of you are New Jersey and two of you are New York?

Joe: No, we tipped the scales. Mike, our old guitar player, left the band and PJ is from New Jersey.

Todd: What's the most memorable thing you've ever seen washed up on the beach?

Ryan: A couch.

Joe: This was in Brooklyn though, right?

Ryan: Coney Island, yeah.

Brian: He also saw a jet ski on the side of the road the other day.

Ryan: And it was purple.

PJ: It was all beat up.

Matt: Why does New Jersey have this rep of being a toxic wasteland?

PJ: Because it is.

Matt: Only a certain tiny little bit.

Brian: The part that's right by New York.

PJ: There's also this Cyanamid dumping ground that was in Bound Brooke. That band Cyanamid named themselves after that. That was the company that made glow sticks.

Brian: A really important company. [Laughs]

Joe: Most of the urban blight is between Newark Airport and New York City. If you take a flight into Newark and you're going to New York City, that's all you ever see of New Jersey. I think that's a large part of it. There are a lot of what are called Superfund sites. They're basically areas of New Jersey that are so polluted and don't have the money to clean them up. They're just cordoned off.

Matt: How much of an area?

Joe: I don't know. There was one behind the suburban neighborhood where I grew up. I remember at one point they gave us all cancer screenings. It was paid for by the school. I had to go in and get checked for cancer, but then I got a fruit rollup. They didn't explain it at the time what it was for. Later on, mom was like, "Oh yeah, they were checking you all for cancer because we were right by a Superfund site." There's something buried in the ground behind where we live. No one knows about that.

Todd: That's why they're the Garden State.

Joe: That's not as well known. I think a lot of states have things like that though. But I think most of it, like I said—the appearance of that one corner.

Matt: Could it just be a heavy rivalry, maybe?

Joe: Oh yeah, of course. New York City/New Jersey. Yeah.

PJ: At the same time, New Jersey kind of embraced that image, with all the Troma movies like *The Toxic Avenger*. It is a pretty

cool image if you think about it: a bunch of mutants walking around. At least that's what I think. Bon Jovi. The Boss, sixty-five-year-old The Boss just hanging out on stage. I take that back. He kicks a lot of ass.

Joe: I've been thinking about this recently. I think New Jersey is kind of culturally played out really bad now. *The Sopranos*. *Jersey Shore*. *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*. There's so much of it that now. I'm like, "Who wants to hear about this anymore? What facet of this place have they now got around to documenting?" Personally, I love New Jersey and will always live there.

Todd: Explain Mischief Night.

Joe: I think everyone has a different name for it, but that's the night before Halloween. In some places, you TP people's houses and throw eggs.

PJ: Smash people's pumpkins.

Joe: Some people call it Devil's Night.

Matt: Detroit's Devil's Night. I had a coworker from Detroit who said he'd go around setting cars and places on fire.

Joe: That's because it's Detroit. We're just trying to have a good time.

Matt: I was told that it was these places that people lived, apartment buildings; cars would be set on fire.

Brian: That's a bizarre tradition.

Matt: Why would you fucking move to Detroit?

Joe: They're actually doing a public service. They're razing the land.

Ryan: You don't like Detroit?

PJ: I like Detroit.

Joe and Brian: It's cool.

PJ: I like Detroit music.

Joe: I like Kiss.

Todd: So Bryan, you were a reality TV star for a little bit? [Laughs]

Bryan: I don't know if I'd say "star."

Todd: Did Snakebite get anything from being on a TLC reality makeover show?

Brian: I got this pair of pants.

Todd: You got a big hole in them.

Brian: Yeah.

Todd: Yeah.

Brian: I got a tattoo and um. . .

Matt: That was this guy? [Matt shows genuine disbelief.]

PJ: Yeah, this guy who looked like Good Charlotte at the end of the episode.

Brian: I looked like a Mighty Mighty Bosstone. Did we get anything out of it as far as what, like educational value?

Todd: Just answer the question.

PJ: You're a YouTube star now.

Brian: It's a YouTube phenomenon.

Joe: You got to hang out with Stigma.

Todd: Oh yeah, he looked like he just wanted to leave.

Brian: I got a lifetime lasting friendship with Stigma. Story about that: we got there and I guess that he thought—he obviously didn't know much about the show. . .

Todd: Really.

Brian: He just knew that TLC called them.

Todd: How'd you get on TLC?

Joe: Tell it from the beginning.

Brian: I don't know how much public

knowledge this is supposed to be.

Joe: Oh, Okay.

Todd: It's on the internet! I know that Joe worked at TLC. There we go. It's all out. It's on the internet, man. I just found that shit out.

Brian: So Joe Steinhardt of Don Giovanni records. . .

Todd: I didn't put his last name; go ahead! [Laughs]

Bryan: Strike that comment. Sorry Joe.

Todd: It's on YouTube!

Brian: Whatever. He doesn't work there anymore. He was working at TLC and they wanted to do a band episode. He told us about it. We thought it would be funny. You get a little bit of money out of it, so the money was gonna go back to putting out our first 7". We obviously just thought it would be really funny.

We shot this video of us all wearing like sweatpants, flip-flops, and talking about how no one takes us seriously as a punk band because we look like we just climbed out of a garbage can. Basically, they picked us because Joe pushed it to the front of the line and said, "I was screening videos and I think I got the guys." So we ended up doing this four-day shoot for a show called TLC's "A Makeover Story." The first drummer of Night Birds was in the band and then a couple other guys. We did this four-day makeover shoot where we got tattooed, we got really silly clothes, we got really bad haircuts, we got a lot of makeup.

Joe: You got introduced to CBGB's as if you'd never been there.

Brian: Everything they did was supposed to be a big surprise, so we'd be around the corner from CBGB's, where one of my bands would have played the week before, and they're like, "Okay guys, I know you have no idea where we are right now, but right around the corner is home of legendary Urge Overkill, CBGB's!" And we're like "okay." Cut. Cut. Cut. We'd do things like five times until we'd be like, "YES!" It was all ridiculous.

Todd: Really, it was scripted?

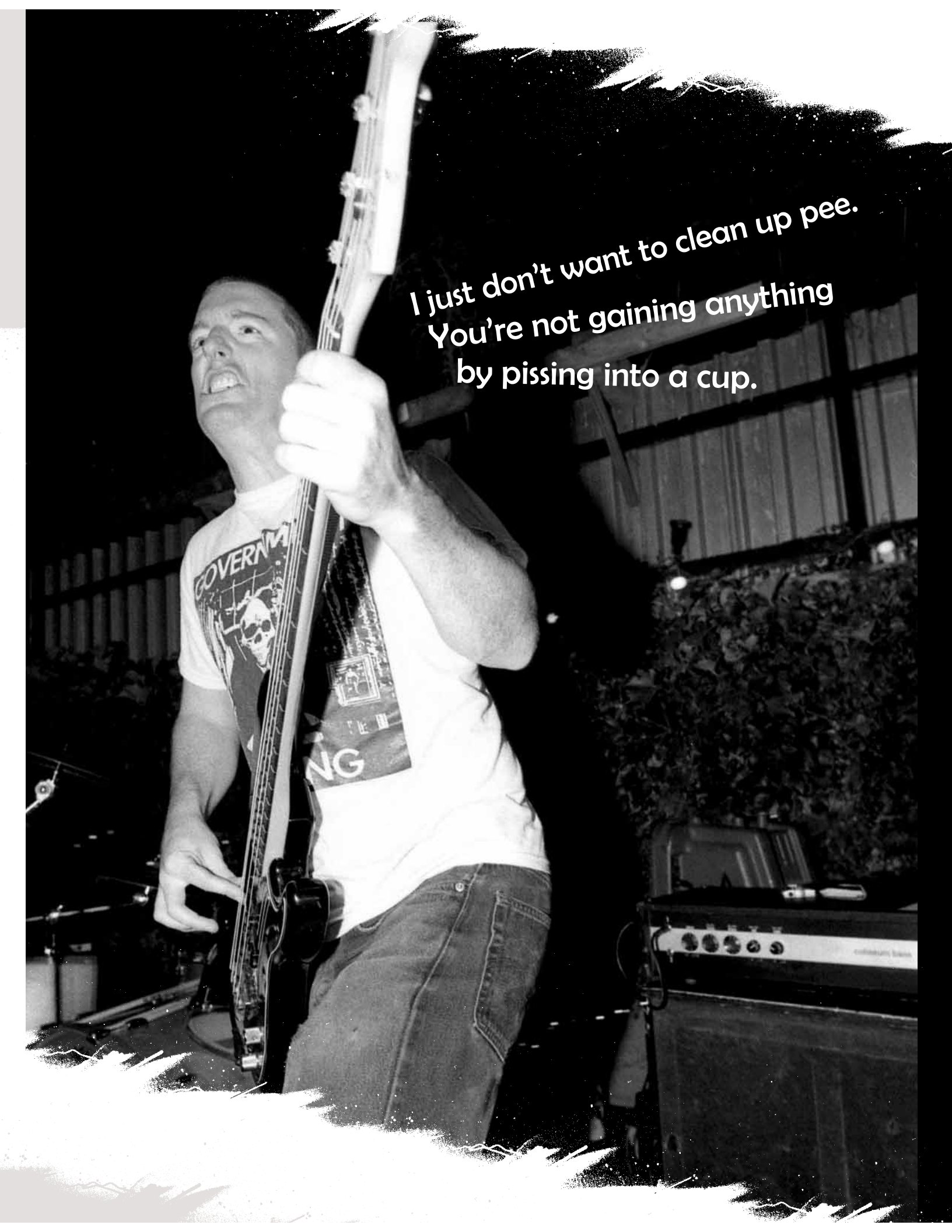
Brian: It wasn't so much scripted as it was when we said something they didn't like they'd make us do it over and over again until they got the proper reaction. Cameras are on you. You feel silly. We weren't serious in the first place, so for us to go and give a reaction that portrayed "excited" was really difficult. Especially at the end when the unveiling comes and you look at yourself and go, "Oh my god." You look like some street urchin from New York City. What the fuck? Cabs wouldn't pick us up and stuff. [Laughs]

Brian: But you can't be like, "What did you do to me?! Oh my god, no!" You have to act real excited.

PJ: It doesn't even really come off as you guys are excited at all. You guys were just laughing at each other.

Ryan: They were bummed that you guys were laughing; they thought you'd be stoked on it.

Brian: Normally, people are on this show and when it's all done, they're like, "Oh my god! You redecorated my house! And redid



I just don't want to clean up pee.
You're not gaining anything
by pissing into a cup.

my kitchen cabinets. Oh, look at the Botox in my lips, I'm so beautiful." But we knew we were going to end up looking a lot stupider at the end of it than we did at the beginning. That was all kind of the goal. It was just for fun.

Ryan: Tell 'em the Stigma part.

Brian: They tell us that we're going to legendary New York Hardcore Ink where we're going to get tattooed by Vinnie Stigma of "Acoustic Front." [Laughs]

Brian: Oh yeah, *Victim in Pain*. Great record by Acoustic Front.

PJ: Wait, is Acoustic Front a real thing? Like, acoustic Agnostic Front?

Brian: No, they just messed it up.

PJ: We should totally do that.

Ryan: In five years it will totally be real.

Brian: So we go to the shop and it's Jimmy G of Murphy's Law and Vinnie. They didn't know that we were goofing on the whole thing, so we get there and they think we're these fucking nubs and we wanna look like Good Charlotte. They don't want to be on camera. They see us and maybe it was the T-shirts we were wearing or something, but I guess we looked like people that show up at their shows. They turn off the cameras and take us in the back room. Vinnie's like, "Let me ask you guys a question. Why you guys here? Why you guys doing this?" We're like, "Oh, just kind of as a goof. We just thought it would be funny. Our buddy got us into this." And he's like, "What kind of music do you guys like?" "We grew up on New York hardcore. I love Agnostic Front. Murphy's Law. Underdog. Kraut." Just naming this stuff. He's kind of really taken back. So then he's like, "All right, let's fucking do this!" [Laughs]

Brian: Turns on "Panty Raid" by Murphy's Law. Kicks everybody of TLC out and then we just partied all night.

Todd: Because on the video he looks like he just wants to get out of there.

Brian: No, he was really cool. I bought his Crumbsuckers LP off of him. He was super, super chill. We just hung out. I saw him two months later and I was like, "Yo, Stigma!" and I don't think he had any idea who I was. It was really funny.

Todd: That's awesome.

Matt: Wasn't someone from Down In Flames connected to do that as well?

Brian: The singer of Down In Flames was the singer of Snakebite.

Joe: What'd they do to him? They made him look like a rockabilly guy.

Brian: Yeah, he had huge blue pompadour. Our bass player Jeff—we went to this crazy barber shop and they just carved a snake into the back of his head and dyed it all green. He had steps. They took studs from a leather jacket and hot glued them to the side of his head. We looked like Martians. It was awesome.

Matt: Did people yell shit at you guys in the street or anything?

Brian: We looked like that for probably about forty-five minutes. We went back to our hotel rooms and everybody shaved their head with a Bic razor. I got my eyebrows tweezed. I was rubbing makeup out of my eyes for days. Then we ran into the TLC people in the lobby.

We got this huge makeover and then we're all like, "This is fucking hilarious." Then we go down into the lobby and the people walk in and they see us standing there, they kind of look at us and we kind of look at them. Later!

Joe: Fucking punk kids.

Brian: Not to mention the fact that we had mics inside our shirts that we thought were off when we were at lunch. We go out to lunch, just us, and we talk about it and make fun of it. Then they transcribed the whole show after the fact. It would be like, "Oh, this is great. Oh, wow, CBGB's... this is fucking stupid." But it was fun, they were nice.

Matt: Did you get money for it?

Brian: The money we got for it went back to Don Giovanni to help put out our first 7".

Todd: I have two engineering questions, specifically for Joe. What is the DOD Punkifier?

Brian: Are you sure that's not for me? That was my first guitar pedal.

Todd: Are you an engineer?

Joe: I think this is a pedal that somebody in the Ergs! had. I think Jeff Schroeck bought it at one point, or we saw one and made fun of it.

Brian: When I got my first guitar, my Mom also bought me the Punkifier. The knobs on it are: Spikes, Slam, and like Studs and Acne or something awesome. And each one sounds exactly the same. Obviously, it comes with a pamphlet of how to get different sounds. Every setting it just turns them up all the way.

Todd: Pretty great. Okay, Ryan, lead me up to this sentence, "I came out of a blackout that night, jacked as fuck, at some crazy nightclub on top of a waterbed. Weird."

Ryan: That wasn't even that crazy of a night.

Joe: He's not exaggerating.

Ryan: I was trying to remember what that was from. Bryan sent something. It was the only thing that I'd ever answered.

Brian: That was the only interview we ever gave Ryan.

Ryan: You sent it to me really late at night. I was really drunk and I didn't know that I could just put record reviews. I didn't think it would make it anywhere. I thought it was going to be on some message board or something. It was the guy from H2O and it was me with all this dumb shit. That was just one of the things I could think of that happened a few months before. We played with King Louie at the Cake Shop. It was a really good show. It was five minutes from my house so I was really stoked on that. I didn't have to go all the way to Jersey for a show. I went out and hung out really late and ended up at some club on top of a waterbed.

Brian: A pretty typical night in the life of Ryan McHale.

Matt: What is a Hoffman's Lens?

Joe: Oh, that's from *They Live*. I think they do say it once in the movie, but it's also from the story that it's based upon.

Brian: The Hoffman Lens is the glasses that they put on in *They Live* that makes them see how things really are.

Joe: We didn't want to call a song "They Live."

Brian: It's a little too...

PJ: That one dude in Boston thought the

song was called, "They Live." The whole set he was like, "Play 'They Live'!" Just because he got the song name wrong, no.

Matt: Because at the end you say, "They Live."

Everybody: Of course!

Matt: I kind of got that impression, but I thought maybe I'm making it something more than it is.

Joe: No, that's all it is. It's not a real thing. There was a lot of debate over whether it was one F or two.

Matt: The political implications behind the song...

Joe: We can go into those in full. No one wants to hear that.

Matt: Yeah, we do. Just kidding.

Todd: Going off the Hoffman Lens, this is more a philosophical question. When was the last time you felt invisible? And that's a good thing or a bad thing. A situation you didn't want to be in, something that you feel completely overlooked. Kickball, maybe.

PJ: I had a dream the other night that I was in a Harry Potter movie and I had that cloak. Kidding... I didn't. Sometimes if I'm in a large crowd, it makes me feel less anxious if I just act like part of the crowd. That's pretty much it.

Brian: I usually don't put myself in positions where I need to feel invisible because if I'm the only person in my living room watching football in my underwear, then there's really no reason. I guess I positively feel invisible because no one can see me. So, I'll say it's a good thing.

Todd: How long is the mourning period for you after football season ends?

Brian: Until the next season begins. [Laughs]

Todd: Is it a deep longing? How deep is your fandom?

Brian: It's my state of mind at this point. It really just sets it home. Not that great. I just like it. It's something to do on a Sunday that's otherwise a pretty standard, boring day in the week. It just gives me an excuse to eat a big sandwich and sit around like an idiot.

Todd: Nice.


PJ: I do that every day.

Brian: I said it gives me an excuse, I didn't say I didn't do it every day.

PJ: You don't feel quite so guilty afterwards, basically.

Todd: I'm not saying these references are wrong at all. But when people are comparing the Night Birds, other bands several come up. The surf stuff of the Dead Kennedys like, "Moon over Marin." Angry Samoans, that makes sense. Some Adolescents, that makes sense. What bands do you wish that you got compared to? And I wanna go first; JFA, I haven't read that yet, Smogtown, Out Cold. So what other things—it doesn't have to be bands—would you like the Night Birds to be compared with? I'm thinking tonally, conceptually. Somebody who doesn't know anything about punk rock, if you're going to explain to your parents and you say, "This is what we sound like, but it's something else." It can be music if you want to.

Joe: I think—at the beginning when we started writing stuff—the way that we were



It's not like it was
in fucking 1981,
but there's still
things going on.

At the end of
those punk
documentaries
you just get
somebody
who's
completely
arrogant and
has no idea.

They think it
stopped as
soon as they
stopped
going to
shows and
started
working at
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writing riffs over the rhythm guitar, a lot of the times I thought we were going for an early Naked Raygun kind of...

Matt: I'd say Naked Aggression. [Laughs]

Joe: That's just off the top of my head. I don't think we sound like them. I've always liked their straightforward, melodic approach.

PJ: For me, personally, before I was in the band, when I first heard of you guys because we were playing—my old band Phibes—with TSOL. That was the first time I got into you guys. One thing I really liked about them was the kind of style of punk rock that I was initially introduced to was Southern California punk rock, like Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Germs, stuff like that. I just thought it was really cool. This wasn't even that long ago. There weren't too many—at least from my view of what was going on in New Jersey—bands that sounded like that. I think I was talking to you, Joe, about this. We were kindred spirits in that we were two bands that kind of had a Southern California style. Not any one specific band—Phibes and Nights Birds obviously sound very different.

Todd: Like, I love the Offspring. [Laughs]

Joe: Can I just change my answer to Pennywise?

Todd: Just the new stuff, though.

Matt: I hear a lot of Agent Orange and CH3.

Joe: CH3 is a good one. We just wanted to play melodic, aggressive punk. If you just look at the spectrum of the stuff that we're into in the early 80s, the most melodic, aggressive punk was the stuff coming out of California. I think we all love everything that was coming out of Texas, everything that was coming out of the Midwest, Necros, Negative Approach, everything from DC, everything from New York and New Jersey.

The stuff that was the most melodic and the most riffy.

Ryan: The fastest drums.

Joe: Real speedy drums, kind of like the Dickies. It just has that SoCal sound.

Matt: I remember talking to a friend that grew up here about the SoCal sound. Something about the SoCal sound lends itself to driving. You put on an early L.A. punk record in whatever you listen to in your car, it's perfect for that. Something about that pace, the tempo, is just perfect for driving.

Ryan: I realized that this is my first time here and we drive everywhere. I could see it like that.

Matt: Tonight after your show, drive down Sunset and put on Social Distortion or something, the first records.

PJ: I could see that. That makes sense.

Ryan: Whenever I go to a new city, I always think about the good things, like the music I like from there. When we went to Detroit, I don't think about the past thirty years of shit that's happened, I just think of the Stooges and the MC5. It's hard to think about that with New York. Coming here, we see all these street signs and I don't know from seeing it, but just hearing it in songs.

Todd: Beach Boulevard!

Joe: We passed that last night, the exit for it.

PJ: It was awesome.

Matt: I remember being star-struck by it. "Holy shit man!"

Joe: We were in that one neighborhood and I was just thinking out loud, "I feel like we're in *Repo Man* right now." And our friend Andy said, "This is the neighborhood where that was shot."

Matt: Being from the East Coast, how did you guys do such a great job of getting the SoCal sound down?

Joe: The surfy guitar, that was part and parcel of the fact that we got our original guitar player, Mike, in the band. He just played guitar like that. That was his style.

Todd: But his style was a lot different from when he played in Hunchback, though.

Joe: The type of music he was playing was different, but the tone is very much... he has an original Fender Jaguar guitar. He plays a Fender tube amp, all that stuff. He worships old '60s instrumental surf stuff. We didn't have to do anything. It was just like, "Oh, he's in the band, so his guitar is going to sound like that." Originally it was just me, Bryan, and we brought Mike in. We kind of knew we wanted to do a melodic punk band.

Brian: It wasn't trying to do, "Hey let's make it sound like this." But I think as soon as you start playing octave chords and you have a couple "Ah's" on a record, all of a sudden everybody's going to say, "Hey, that sounds like the Adolescents." If you have an evil-sounding surfy riff, the go-to is, "Hey, that sounds like the Dead Kennedys." But a millions bands have done it before. It just came naturally.

Todd: Bryan, so how did the Casualties change your life?

Brian: ...how did the Casualties change my life?

Todd: There's somebody very special in your life because of the Casualties.

Brian: That is true. Good point. Man, you know your shit. [Laughs] We'll say probably thirteen years ago. . .

Todd: 1999 it was.

Brian: Is that thirteen years ago?

Todd: That was on your registry. Just sayin'.

Brian: Goddamn! So, I got married two years ago. My wife, Amanda, the first time we ever hung out was thirteen years ago at



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a Casualties/3 Against 1 show at the Cove in Roselle Park, New Jersey.

Joe: Was that the one that had a riot at it?

Brian: Probably.

Joe: I wasn't at it, but my brother was at one there that ended in a riot.

Brian: It probably was. There were a couple that ended in a riot. But that was the first time we ever hung out. She went because she knew I was going. Thirteen years later...

Todd: You guys are buying cane sugar utensils.

Brian: Somebody pointed out to me recently that if the Casualties were from Japan they would be one of the most hyped bands ever, but because they're from New York they just get slagged on for being seemingly like a mall-punk band. Those guys are cool.

PJ: Definitely really nice guys.

Todd: I would say Japan or Scandinavia.

Matt: Somebody else pointed that out to me a few years ago. Any touring band, if you say you're from Japan, you're going to get a larger turnout than if you say you're from New Jersey or Los Angeles.

Todd: Just to cover the airfare, I would do it out of sympathy.

Matt: People just shit their pants, "Oh my god, they're from Japan!" I've seen a lot of mediocre Japan bands. And even the so called classics aren't that great.

Brian: Just to cap off the Casualties, I think that band rules. Those guys are seriously as punk as they could be. They've been doing it for thirty fucking years.

Todd: Really? No...

Brian: Maybe not a band, but they've been around.

Todd: They're that old? They're over thirty years old?

Brian: The singer is really old.

Matt: They're definitely very organized. I remember having to deal with Punk Core at this place I worked at—if I said I need twenty T-shirts—if I called them on Monday, I'd have it by the next Monday. I had exactly twenty T-shirts.

Ryan: You'd expect them to be all wasted.

Brian: You'd just get a G.B.H. back patch and that's it. [Laughs]

Matt: I'll give them credit. They're very organized. Maybe that will attribute to their success.

Todd: Ryan, you were kicked out of this band for a little bit weren't you?

Ryan: Yeah. [Laughs]

Todd: For being tardy, is that correct?

Ryan: Yeah. I was like, twenty-one at the time.

Matt: How old are you now, twenty-two?

Ryan: Twenty-three. I think I got my shit together a little bit.

Brian: He did. It was the best turnaround I've ever seen from anybody. Also, getting Ryan back in the band was the best collective move we had ever made.

Todd: Who made the decision to kick axe him?

Brian: Well, I think there were three pretty solid strikes. We also didn't know Ryan really well at the beginning. It's not like he'd been a longtime friend. He was recommended to join our band through another friend. So we tried it out, it was going really well, and then there



We're on a mission from god.

were a couple things. Him and Mike lived in Brooklyn. Me and Joe lived in Jersey. There was a time we went to Brooklyn and Ryan just no call, no showed on a practice, which sucks if you drive an hour and pay the seventeen dollar bridge toll to get there and sit around with your thumb up your ass all night.

Ryan: I do remember when that happened.

Brian: And that's how it happened. The second one we were playing a show. Him and Mike would carpool from Brooklyn and Mike was already going to be in Jersey, so Ryan had to take the train to the show. He missed like three trains and we barely got there in time to play. And then the day we were recording the *Midnight Movies 7* we moved the time of recording up to like 9 AM because the day before Ryan decided he had to get his wisdom teeth out or something.

Ryan: Yeah.

PJ: You never did that.

Brian: Of course he never got his fucking wisdom teeth out! [Laughs]

Brian: So we moved recording up to like 9 AM and it's one o'clock in the afternoon, day of recording, and we're still calling Ryan. His phone is going straight to voicemail. We had it to the point where one of our friends was just going to fill in. We were trying to have the record out in time for something. We were really rushing to get it done. Long story short, he ended showing up to the recording. It came out really well. But it was one of those things where we just didn't know him well enough.

Ryan: I mean, in my defense, I had never

been in a serious band. So I wasn't really, I don't know... I'm used to not coming to practice. [Laughs]

Brian: It was also the kind of thing where we were never really like, "Hey Ryan, listen man, here's what you're doing wrong." It was just, if he can't tell that this is wrong, it's not going to work. We kind of talked about it and said, "I don't think so." Basically, after we made that rash decision, we talked about it after the fact. It was probably four months later. Ryan came back and did a tour with us. Nothing like that has happened in the past two years and he's on the ball. At this point, if anybody left the band, the band would be done.

Matt: I've also noticed that you guys appeal to people my age and older who have kind of given up on punk rock and hardcore in general. You guys seem like the one band they still know about it, as opposed to all the other bands going on right now.

Todd: It's called preplanning.

Matt: It's amazing. There's guys in the forty and older crowd.

Brian: I think that's mostly just due to our street team doing a killer job. [Laughs]

Joe: Anytime they make a documentary on punk or some scene. They did the one on Chicago, they did the *American Hardcore* one. There's always that chapter at the end that is just all the old timers from that scene trashing whatever's around. "Punk doesn't exist anymore."

Todd: That's my favorite chapter.

Joe: The Chicago one is the most brutal. I mean, I love watching it.

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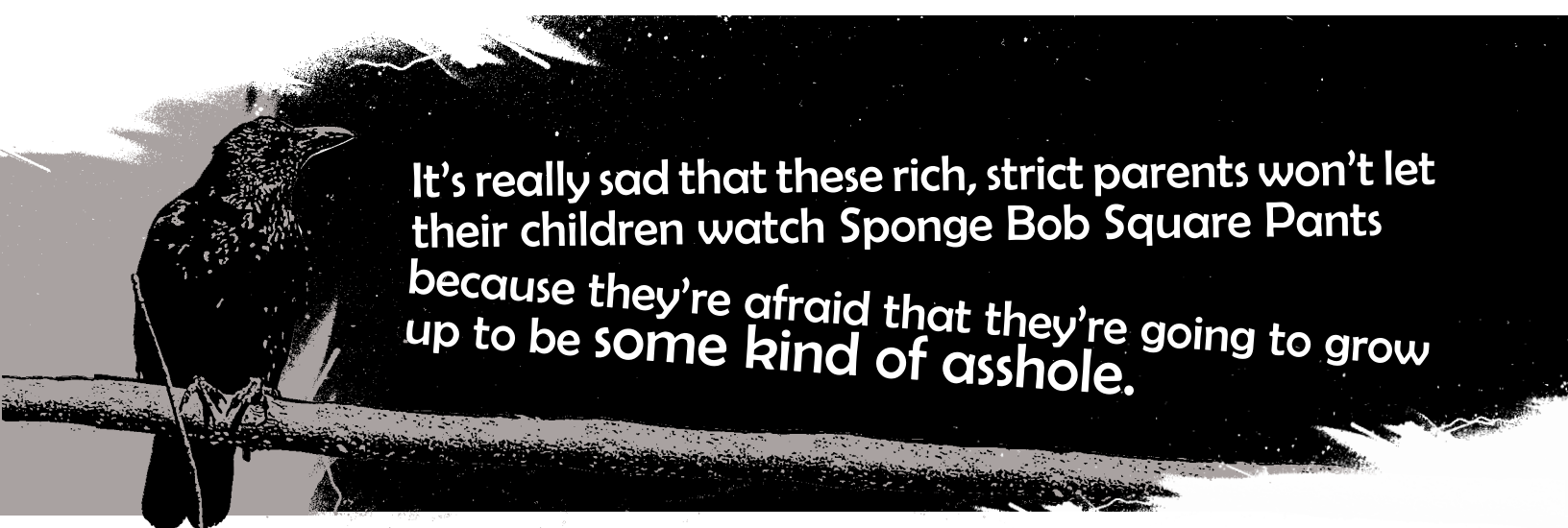


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It's really sad that these rich, strict parents won't let their children watch *Sponge Bob Square Pants* because they're afraid that they're going to grow up to be some kind of asshole.

Todd: But Jeff Pezzati is awesome in that. He's the shining light. "It made it into the suburbs, it's never going away."

Joe: I can't remember; I think it's one of the guys from *Strike Under*. He's just like, "I don't know what kids are doing now with punk. I can't say."

Brian: That's the problem. None of those guys really do. There's always one or two that who are still with it, whether it's your Kevin Seconds, Jeff Pezzati, or somebody still active in the punk scene. They know that there is still a punk scene. Jeff's doing *The Bomb*. They're doing a new band that plays shows. Yeah, it's not like it was in fucking 1981, but there's still things going on. At the end of those movies you just get somebody who's completely arrogant and has no idea. They think it stopped as soon as they stopped going to shows and started working at the Home Depot.

Matt: You also have the L.A. punk scene where they complain about hardcore coming in. Well, hardcore kind of legitimized your bands and gave them a longer life. Do you really think people today would really give a fuck about X if it wasn't for Black Flag and the hardcore bands that came up behind them? I really don't think so.

Todd: That's a really tough question.

Matt: I don't think they would. Go to Middle America. No one is going to know who the fuck X are. And if you play it for them, they be like, "Big deal, I wanna hear Foghat." [Laughs]

Todd: Who is the best teacher you had growing up and what did you learn from them?

PJ: For me it was in high school. I had an English teacher. His name was Jeff Maiore. Mr. Maiore. He was the coolest teacher I ever had. I had him freshman year for whatever English all the normal freshman kids had and then senior year for A.P. English. I remember freshman year walking in—he had a printout of the *Specials* with a picture of the LP and lyrics to "It Doesn't Make It Alright." I walked in just knowing I'm going to love this teacher. He had a big *Clockwork Orange* poster. We would talk about the Clash and all this other stuff. He pretty much got me interested in reading. The best books I read in high school weren't books on the curriculum, they were books where he was like, "Hey, here's *Confederacy of Dunces*. We're going to be reading *The Stranger*. You

might want to look into this. Here's a couple of critical essays talking about *The Stranger*. Mr. Maiore was the best.

Matt: This is a public school?

PJ: Yeah.

Matt: This is New Jersey?

PJ: Yeah.

Matt: All right, I'll move to New Jersey.

PJ: And when I say the best, I mean, not like there were a couple of runner ups. He was a different breed of human being.

Ryan: I never had any teachers like that.

Joe: No one has ever taught you anything. [Laughs]

PJ: There was the one girl in your G.E.D. class who didn't know what a rabbit was.

Ryan: Oh yeah, my G.E.D. class went on a class trip one time to the zoo in Prospect Park, which is free and dumpy. This girl didn't know what a rabbit was.

PJ: She saw the rabbit and was like, "What the hell is that thing?"

Brian: I think that shows a lot about Ryan's teachers.

Ryan: I had a teacher before I dropped out of college—who I was talking about music with—and I said my favorite band was the Skeptics. I was really into UK82 at the time. I was surprised that he had heard of it. We started shooting the shit and he knew Agnostic Front and everything.

Todd: Acoustic Front. [Laughs]

Ryan: But then I dropped out, so I guess he wasn't that good. [Laughs]

PJ: He didn't fail you. You failed him.

Ryan: He was a good teacher, though. I probably would've stuck with it if more of 'em were like that guy. Can't remember his name, but he was cool.

Brian: Bill Murray's twitter account. I feel like I learned more from watching stupid movies and nonsense television. I feel like I learned more from *Seinfeld* than I did in high school. I wasn't very good at high school.

Todd: I'm not being flippant about this; it's reflected in the *Night Birds*, actually. There are a lot of things that are informed in *Night Birds* lyrically and musically, and I think that's a very honest reflection of what you just said.

Matt: Pop culture references. You guys are like the Beastie Boys of punk rock.

Joe: That's really cool of you to say. [Laughs]

Todd: I mean there are tons of book, movie, and TV show references in your lyrics and I think it's nice. It's embedded. It's not like, "Hey look at this thing."

Joe: If you always think of like third or fourth rate horror punk bands, the formula to writing a song is, "Okay, here's the title of the movie. That's the chorus. We just have to fill in."

Brian: I think that's why it's really sad that these rich, strict parents won't let their children watch *Sponge Bob Square Pants* because they're afraid that they're going to grow up to be some kind of asshole.

PJ: My parents didn't let me watch WWF after my brother slammed my dad's head into the floor.

Brian: I think you gave them reason to make that decision.

PJ: I didn't slam my dad's head into the floor.

Matt: Well, the thing with *Sponge Bob* is that they say it promotes homosexuality.

Todd: It's a starfish, though.

PJ: That's fucked up.

Matt: He's a pink starfish, ya' know. Patrick, always walks around in his underwear.

PJ: I thought those were boardshorts.

Matt: That's what I thought, too.

Brian: That's how you create a fucked up child, when you don't expose them to things. You learn a lot by watching TV and listening to music, all this pop culture. When you shelter your kids from shit like that, and all of a sudden they're twenty-two and they go into this world where there is stuff that they don't see in their house every day.

PJ: Like the internet.

Brian: There's violence and fucking nude bars. That's how you create serial killers, by just dropping all this real shit on them at one time.

PJ: Well, I think it takes more than that to make a serial killer.

Brian: No, that's it. That's all it takes. [Laughs]

Todd: Thank you *Night Birds*, I really appreciate it.

Night Birds: Hey, thank you.

Matt: What *Star Wars* character do you identify with the most?

PJ: Shuut up.

PUNKNEWS BUYOUT

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What follows are four distinct articles from Razorkake contributors in response to the recent gobbling up of Punknews by Buzzmedia. We decided to tackle this both online and in print. Online, because Punknews is purely digital and we wanted to analyze them in their own media. We also printed it in this issue because we think what these inter-related articles tackle is much bigger than Punknews and is much more than a digital phenomenon. —Todd Taylor

THERE'S GOT TO BE A BETTER WAY: PUNKNEWS IS ADVERTAINMENT

by Todd Taylor

"This isn't any different than how it's ever been."

That quote is from Punknews.org Managing Editor Adam White. It's telling and couldn't be more on point. On the surface, Punknews is cloaked in the robe of a collaborative effort. Its editorial content is provided by "volunteers." It "supports and endorses" charities. Its 2005 "About Us" states that "our mandate is to provide an inclusive, community-based site." It's a .org, not a .com website. It uses words like "community" and "family." But Punknews is not a 501(c)(3), or the Canadian equivalent. It is not a non-profit. It never has been. There's a world of difference between not making money and being a non-profit. There's a huge difference between "unpaid staff" and "volunteers." There's a large difference between working very hard—with collective burden and collective reward—and a payout where the only person privy to its terms and enrichment is its leader. That's called a boss exploiting unpaid labor.

Let's not pussyfoot and nicey-nice: Punknews is a website where owner Aubin Paul doesn't have to disclose anything. He admits to entering "an exclusive relationship with digital media publisher Buzzmedia," but hasn't shown any of his staff the details of the contract. Paul, an avid Tweeter, abruptly stopped on August 2, 2012, approximately one month before the deal's announcement. Managing Editor White said he didn't know of the deal until it was announced on the site. In the comments section, a person under the Punknews editorial umbrella using the internet handle "1776" states, "Again, not speaking as the person who makes the decisions here. The agreement's between the site owner, Aubin, and Buzzmedia. Do I think they're going to share a contract between two private companies in the comment section for public vetting? Probably not. Not my call in any case."

Paul declined multiple requests for an interview. At Paul's behest, White declined to answer questions "to give him the courtesy of deciding if I should speak about this with you or not," and in an email stated, "I'm only going on what Aubin's told me, as it's *his* site and *his* (my emphasis) business deal with Buzz." That was followed up with, "I've never spoken to a human being at Buzz in my life." These statements strike me as true. They are a far cry from the public perception that Punknews propagates on its site.

White would make a fine cheerleader. He may not know the mechanics and rules of the business game, but he knows when to

shake his punk ra-ra pom poms. While he hasn't seen the contract and can't be quoted on any of its details, when he refers to the news about Punknews acquisition as reported by *Billboard*, he blames a PR company that put out an "overzealous" press release that Buzzmedia acquired Punknews. The press release he's referring to is directly from Buzzmedia, it's hosted on Buzzmedia's site. The August 27, 2012 announcement from Punknews' new boss is worth quoting at length.

"Today BUZZMEDIA (www.buzz-media.com), one of the fastest growing digital media companies, announced the acquisition of authentic, go-to punk rock sites Under The Gun Review, Alter The Press! and PropertyOfZack. These three sites will join forces with BUZZMEDIA's AbsolutePunk (www.absolutepunk.net), the definitive source for punk rock news, and the also-acquired Punknews.org, and roll up under a new suite of online punk music properties titled AbsoluteVoices. AbsolutePunk will serve as a central hub to the broader AbsoluteVoices publishing group, expanding its robust editorial offerings, while bringing a wider variety of perspectives and in-depth music coverage to its extensive reader base and fan community."

"We had to make a choice whether to just let the press release stand," White said, "or to make a big stink by arguing that the finer points of the deal were glossed over in public. We chose not to do that. Bad choice? Maybe, but that's what we did."

Hold up. If someone misrepresents a company financially, it is completely fair and within your company's rights to have the offenders publicly correct their mistake. That is, if it is a mistake and it is "overzealous." That is, if Buzzmedia *isn't* in the power position and *isn't* calling the shots for the shape that Punknews will ultimately take. That is if Buzzmedia *isn't* going to roll Punknews into "a new suite of online punk music properties."

In the Punknews podcast of September 7, 2012, White slips back into cheerleader mode, admitting his ignorance of the deal's stipulations: "I'm just a volunteer editor like the rest of you guys."

Then there's Punknews' footnote at the very bottom of their site, which provides indisputable acknowledgment of Punknews being owned by Buzzmedia: "Punknews.org is a member of Buzzmedia Music, a division of Buzzmedia." If they really are fight-ready independents, duty-driven to protect their editorial integrity, worthy of defense by both readers and unpaid staff, and really cared about how they're represented on their own site, why didn't they get specific, like BrooklynVegan? (And this is no defense of BrooklynVegan.) Here's their footer: "BrooklynVegan is independently owned and operated since 2004. BrooklynVegan is a member of Buzzmedia Music, a division of Buzzmedia. In other words, Buzzmedia sells the ads." Is Punknews just being passive or can't its sole owner, Paul just state, "We were bought out?"

Punknews has effectively walked the fence, shrugging and "aw shucks"-ing the entire time in what could be characterized as either highly suspicious and calculating behavior or a meandering trail of awful decisions. If it really is no big deal, why is it so shirked on a "news" website? (I'm playing, but half of their name does include the word "news.") "Half Idiot" on the Punknews message board makes a salient point about the credibility of Punknews' own announcement of the new contract: "...it was buried as the first story early in the



Punknews is a private enterprise harvesting the free labor of its workers, further enriching already-rich companies.

morning with no picture. Seriously, every little beardo band in the world gets an attention-grabbing picture. News of the site's acquisition gets treated like it's a software update."

So, what's the reasoning? Why even swim with the sharks?

Money.

Point 1.08 from the Punknews FAQ, 2011: "Any ad money we makes goes to paying our bandwidth and hardware maintenance. Nobody makes a dime off of the site." White drives the point home in the aforementioned podcast that, "Punknews is run out of a bunch of bedrooms. There's no office here." Rich Verducci, the interviews editor bulldogs, "It's like you kids have never seen ads on the internet. I know you get your music for free, but bandwidth and shit still costs money."

Many months ago, when I was on Punknews as part of my research for the Night Birds interview, I saw Chevy ads and "guess who's?" boobs. Punknews already had an existing relationship with Buzzmedia. That relationship has since deepened. Paul confirms this further down in the lengthy press release on Buzz's site. "Punknews.org has always had a great relationship with BuzzMedia. They have worked hard to make sure we have everything we need to build great content and great communities while respecting and encouraging our independence. *It couldn't be a better fit.*" (my emphasis).

I also know that the average punk rocker has a short attention span. In a couple of months, this will all seem like distant history. It makes tactical sense that the person who has access to the only documentation remains tight-lipped. No simple balance sheet has been offered. (Legit 501(c)(3)'s financials are public record.) No real numbers of ad revenue versus operating cost have been released. There hasn't been a vetting of Paul's personal income.

All of this leads to this: Punknews is a private enterprise harvesting the free labor of its workers, further enriching already-rich companies.

I wouldn't be writing this article if the site was called AbsoluteMedia or AbsoluteVoices or Indienews.org. It's called "punk" and it's called punk for a reason. It's still a marketable—and in some hands, profitable—term. So when Buzzmedia names the five sites it corralled in one day "authentic, go-to punk sites," it troubles me not because some venture capitalist ding dong calls something punk. It's troublesome because these media companies' reach is so broad, so manipulative, so invasive, so homogenizing, that authentic DIY punk rock gets muted and lost in the static. It gets overwhelmed and hidden in plain sight. That sucks.

According to Quantcast.com, a company that produces reports analogous to the Nielsen ratings for TV viewership (between April 29, 2009 and September 19, 2012, in a report run on September 20, 2012) Punknews averaged about 187,906 total unique users a month; 108,981 of those are domestic users, which is useful for advertising revenue. For Buzz, Punknews is a medium-sized fish that will be absorbed with four others to... to what, exactly? To help DIY punk rock in meaningful ways? Is it the most delicious Trojan horse coup to celebrate small, overlooked punk bands, to raise hard-working truly independent bands and labels who can't afford expensive advertising? Is it the righteous culmination set forth in February 2003's "Punknews/About," written by Paul: "Punk and its related subgenres saved my life, time and time again, and I think of this as my way to give something back to the community that's been at my side for ages...."

Nope. Let's not be naïve.

Fuck it. Let's get cynical. Punknews is primarily an aggregator of releases pumped out by the public relations machines at labels at an alarming rate. Small independents that are creating their own

content can't match Punknews. It's all about converting eyeballs and keystrokes into ad revenue. Punknews cops to not really giving a shit about corporate incursions into punk rock in the first place. Again in their FAQs (which were nuked off their site quickly after the acquisition but can be accessed through archive.org's Wayback Machine). "5.1: At the end of the day, the label a band is signed to *does not matter at all.* (my emphasis) However, *we don't feel that a band's label should be completely transparent.*" (my emphasis again) Let's rephrase. Punknews isn't interested in ideals. It's totally predisposed and down with collusion, because to them major and indie are greyscale gradients, not black and white. Yet, they still can't help themselves with a bit of a reach-around and a pat on the head to the little folks. "Of course, we would still love to see small business prosper as opposed to large shareholder, profit-concerned conglomerates, so we admit some bias exists." On the September 2012 sidebar of Punknews is a hamster driving a car that it wants you to buy. Yes, bias exists.

As a punk with ideals, one of the most depressing results of white-hot, advertising-driven media is that it steals meaningful words and hollows them out. Take the word "family," for instance. It means one thing when you're talking about blood and long-time friends versus what White calls the "Buzz advertising family" and Punknews as "part of their brand family." Buzzmedia re-appropriates the word "community": "Punknews is powered by a user community that has expanded and replenished itself for more than a decade." That "community" is used by Buzz to harvest a "family" it sells off to large corporations willing to pay top dollar to get in front of niche audiences they can convert to potential customers.

Then the light bulb fizzed fully to life. Of course. This is about pure-bred capitalist "independence." Not independence, independence, but "independence"—doing what Punknews wants to do. Paul is explicit: "We all worked hard to craft a relationship that encourages *our* independence" (my emphasis). It begs the question. Independence to do what? Again, White states that through its relationship with Buzzmedia, Punknews is free to "use that collective number of punk sites they're involved in as *leverage*," (my emphasis) to sell ads and get "exclusives on stuff that's cool." It helps when Punknews wants "to stream the new Green Day record.... We can compete with the *Rolling Stones* and *Spins* of the world—*Spin's* a bad example because Buzz owns *Spin*." Oops. Punknews, over the past ninety days, has posted more status updates with links to content on their Facebook page than *Rolling Stone* and *Spin* combined. That's an incredible volume of work contributed by Punknews' unpaid staff.

That leaves us with one of two scenarios. One, Aubin is a bad businessman. He can't convert colossal amounts of free labor into some serious advertising revenue because he's crushed by overhead costs. Two, Aubin is an awesome businessman. He has converted enormous amounts of free labor into money he doesn't have to admit to anyone that he's making. In turn, the people he's making the money off of—both contributors and viewers—become his strongest, most avid supporters. It's a clever tactic.

Unethical, but clever.

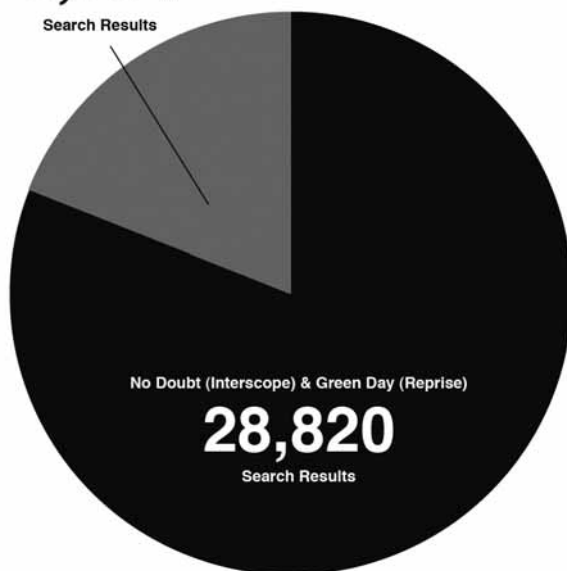
Todd Taylor is the Executive Director of Razorcake / Gorsky Press, Inc. Razorcake is the first and only official non-profit DIY punk rock fanzine in America primarily dedicated to supporting independent music culture.

These media companies' reach is so broad, so manipulative, so invasive, so homogenizing, that authentic DIY punk rock gets muted and lost in the static.

Descendents, Black Flag, Dillinger 4, Toys That Kill,
Marked Men, Tiltwheel & Sass Dragons

6,734

Search Results



THE PUNKNEWS PYRAMID SCHEME

By Dan Ozzi

Itake Punknews with a grain of salt. That is to say, I can tolerate the site's laughable, routine promotion of bands that fall outside the realm of "punk." And I mean *well* outside. Seriously, go to Punknews right now and run a search for "Eve 6" and see how many results turn up. I'll save you the time—it's sixty-seven. Sixty-seven non-ironic results.

I don't even really mind the site's flood of advertisements. Sure, it's cringe-worthy to see ads for Six Flags and Subway right next to posts about Propagandhi's upcoming tour dates. But frankly, I often need to know about Propagandhi's upcoming tour dates and sometimes it's convenient to have a centralized place to go and look up that information.

Also, it's 2012 and ad-blockers are widely available to download for free. With a few clicks, I can mask the fact that I am being bombarded by advertisements for Ford trucks and remain completely impervious to information about their new line of rugged, yet dependable Ford F-150s, which were ranked as 2012's 'Motor Trend Truck of the Year' for their first-in-class horsepower and fuel efficiency. "Ford, Go Further™."

Sorry, I sort of blanked out for a minute there. What was I talking about? Oh yes, Punknews.

I do think a volunteer-run website like Punknews can serve a purpose within the punk community. In an ideal world, that website, especially one with the word "punk" right in the title, would instruct any corporate advertisers to promptly fuck off and then subsequently bask in the pride of owning something corporate giants can't get their hands on. But this is not an ideal world and Punknews is not an ideal representation of the punk community. It's just a website.

So I've always felt that if Punknews needs to take in some advertising dollars from Revlon to keep the lights on so that I can get my Propagandhi tour news, I'm willing to look the other way. I'll go out on a limb here and say that just about every other visitor to the site also looks the other way on the ads and that untargeted banner ads from companies like Ford have zero impact on Punknews' regular visitors. It's amazing to me that these companies even continue to waste advertising dollars there.

However, the recent acquisition of Punknews by media conglomerate, Buzzmedia, changes the entire dynamic. Instead of taking advertisers' cash to fund the site's operations, Punknews and its content are now the property of Buzzmedia, who bought the site, along with three other "punk" sites for the sole purpose of expanding their market reach.



This is not an ideal world and Punknews is not an ideal representation of the punk community. It's just a website.

The specifics of the deal have been kept under wraps. Little information was provided in Buzzmedia's press release about it and few on the Punknews staff seem to even be privy to the internal details. But if I had to guess, I imagine the thought processes on both sides of the deal went something like this:

A Buzzmedia employee was sitting in the minimal, yet sensibly modern Buzzmedia conference room. He had some title like Chief Social Brand Outreach For Developing New Media Strategist: "Our branding analytics are showing that we are not reaching suburban white males, ages 16.2 through 16.5 who don't listen to Chris Brown. We should diversify our entities to maximize our market reach and increase daily page views." This was followed by a long and hearty round of back-patting.

Fast forward to Punknews founder, Aubin Paul, getting the call on his cell phone: "What's that? You mean I might not have to have to have a roommate when I'm forty? Show me where to sign!"

Again, since details were held close to the vest, that's only my simplistic imagined scenario of how it went down. But regardless of the particulars, one thing is true: Now, Punknews, a historically volunteer-run website, is generating revenue for a parent company. That is no longer a volunteer system. It's a pyramid scheme. The guy sitting atop the mountain is collecting money off the work of unpaid contributors. That is trickle down economics at best—a system popularized by Ronald Reagan, who, thinking back to my punk rock training, was a real shithhead according to Professor Jello Biafra.

Seemingly, this deal should have caused a mutiny among the faithful Punknews editors who would have been within their rights to be outraged by the idea of producing a free daily stream of content for a large corporate entity while being left completely in the dark about the financial and structural particulars of the deal. But then again, one can never really get in the minds of people who find merit in running sixty-seven pieces on Eve 6.

There is now a weird sense of Stockholm syndrome within the insular community of Punknews editors who appear to be oddly content with the fact that money is being made directly off their backs. After the acquisition's announcement, many of them took to the website's comment section and Twitter to go into full defensive PR-mode. Whether or not they're willing to acknowledge it, they're being exploited in this deal. When you are part of something that is community-driven, everyone involved is supposed to reap the benefits of success, just as everyone is supposed to feel the crunch of failure.

And it's not just the Punknews contributors who are being exploited here. It's the entire DIY punk community, from the touring bands to the independent labels that Punknews covers. With their recent acquisitions, Buzzmedia aimed to buy various pieces of independent culture to suit different "lifestyles" so they can cover more ground with advertisers.

If you want a single image to best sum this up, look no further than Buzzmedia's website. Below their slogan, "Defining culture. Addicting

The marketplace, by its very nature, cannot provide the most meaningful aspects of life: love, friendships, autonomy, and leisure time that is genuinely free from work.

audiences,” there is a photo displaying more than a dozen soda bottles. Each bottle contains a different color soda. The label on each bottle displays the logo of one of their “brands”—Spin, Stereogum, Idolator, and others. That’s what companies like Buzzmedia do. They invest in a variety of products to blanket an entire market so that whatever flavor soda you happen to like, they’ve got you covered. But remember: You don’t have to drink soda at all.

Now, how about those Propagandhi tour dates?

Dan Ozzi is a music writer and editor of JadedPunk.com.

PUNKNEWS AND CULTURE

by Sean Carswell

Media corporation Buzzmedia recently purchased a handful of punk rock websites, including Punknews.org. Buzzmedia is your typical corporate media conglomerate, striving to maximize profit through the sale of advertising. Those purchases mean these sites are now typical corporate media dedicated to maximizing profits through advertising. Buzzmedia’s press release about the acquisition makes no bones about this. They boast about reaching “one in four millennials in the U.S. every month.” In their own words, the service they offer is an “understanding of the young adult audience to provide customized, innovative marketing and advertising solutions across its branded properties.” Their purpose is clear. They get the attention of young people so they can sell them some shit.

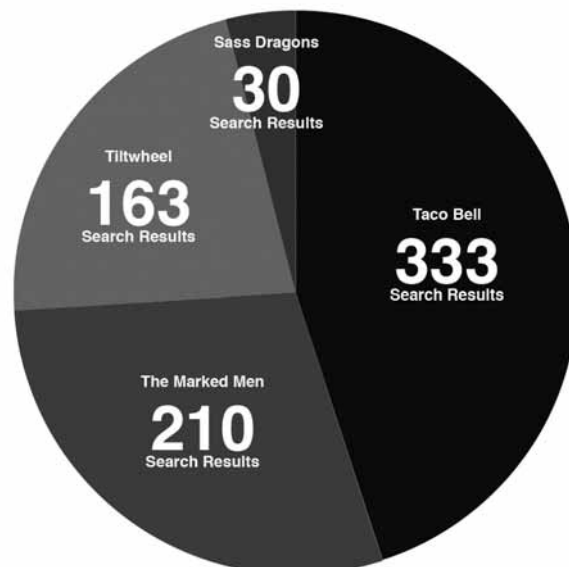
On the one hand, this doesn’t bother me. I’ve spent maybe two or three minutes of my life on Punknews.org. I don’t have much interest in a site that covers Sum 41 (still) and brags about breaking Good Charlotte. If they want to be a “branded property,” that’s their choice. If they want to call kids “millennials” and dedicate their lives and creativity to selling kids cell phone plans, so be it.

On the other hand, there’s something about this that bothers me a great deal. I’ll explain.

I wrote for a Florida music magazine several years ago. I was crestfallen when I found a column I’d written running next to a Kid Rock ad. I’d spent a lot of time on that column. I’d written honestly about things that were meaningful to me. I’d put those thoughts out into the world only to find them a vehicle for selling some kind of sexist, meathead metal. In those days, a lot of people would tell me they only read that local rag to read my column. This meant that I was bringing people to Kid Rock. I thought long and hard about who I was writing for and why I was doing it. When I got done thinking, I stopped writing for that magazine.

It wasn’t the one particular ad that drove me away. It was something larger about advertising. I understand that advertising is a reality of our consumer corporate society. Nearly all of our media runs through the filter of advertising. And since our view of everything that we can’t witness firsthand comes through the media, it means that our view of the world beyond our little lives is filtered through advertising. We have to ask ourselves: what does that filter do? What cultural messages, what value systems, is our view of the world filtering through?

In some cases, advertising can be fairly benign. If the advertisements are geared solely to inform people of the availability of an item (like, “Hey, we put out this record. If you like what this magazine covers, you might like our music”), there’s nothing nefarious about it. The advertising becomes a problem when two things happen. First, when



advertising dictates content, the integrity of the media is lost. The media’s content becomes little more than an extension of the ad. Our worldview becomes distorted. This is a big problem in the mainstream media where advertising has made certain issues impossible to discuss. Even climate change—which is about as close to a scientific fact as we can get—becomes questionable because slowing climate change means curtailing the behaviors that fund the media, such as driving cars and shopping as a means of recreation.

Advertising also becomes a problem when it creates “lifestyle” ads. This—and not Kid Rock—was my real issue at the magazine. I volunteered there sometimes, also, and saw what happened behind the scenes. One big goal for the guy who sold advertising was to rope in these lifestyle ads: ads for products that coupled themselves with punk and indie music, though they had nothing to do with it. These were ads for cars, beer, tobacco, or shoes that would become “punk” by their association with the magazine’s content. There’s something dangerous there. It goes beyond, say, associating Chuck Taylors with punk rock. Making Chucks punk rock is obviously fucked up because punk shouldn’t be synonymous with a shoe that’s sewn in a sweatshop using slave labor to further enrich a plutocrat like Nike co-founder and Chairman Phil Knight. Punk should be better than that.

Beyond the simple dangers of these lifestyle ads, though, we have the larger issue of how our culture is constructed.

Our culture is built on the stories we tell each other and the values or meaning that we place in those stories. Contemporary advertising is our culture’s biggest storyteller. More than any other source, advertisements create our values. They tell us what is meaningful. And what messages do all advertisements—regardless of the products they sell—send to us? First, that unfettered consumption is good and necessary. This message is vile. Contemporary consumption

The assault on integrity is intense and it requires constant vigilance to protect the core ethos of the DIY punk underground.

is neither good nor necessary. It's empty, vacuous, and sucking the life out of our planet. The second message is that the concerns of the marketplace supersede all other concerns in society. This is a prevailing value in our consumer corporate culture, and it's seriously flawed. The marketplace, by its very nature, cannot provide the most meaningful aspects of life: love, friendships, autonomy, and leisure time that is genuinely free from work. The meaningful aspects of life should supersede the marketplace. This should be common sense. The problem is that advertising spends billions of dollars to change our notion of the common that we base our sense on.

This is my concern.

When conglomerates like Buzzmedia start buying up punk rock media (and even shitty punk media like Punknews.org), they make the word "punk" a brand used to sell the very dangerous, destructive value system that I got into punk rock to fight against.

Sean Carswell is the co-founder of Gorsky Press and Razorcake Magazine.

PUNKNEWS AND THE PRICE OF INTEGRITY

By Kevin Dunn

Iheard the news of Buzzmedia's purchase of Punknews.org and three other online punk sites while I was re-reading two books. The first was Dick Hebdige's 1979 classic *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, about the emergence of U.K. punk and how mainstream culture worked to convert the elements of punk into mass-produced objects. Faced with punk's disruption of the status quo, capitalism sought to tame and re-package punk into a safe commodity to be consumed by the paying masses. Of course, this wasn't a new development. After rock'n'roll emerged in the 1950s—with its threat to established racial and sexual norms—it was quickly watered down and safely sold to the newly-discovered "teen market" by the music industry. It is a familiar tale: the Riot Grrrl's call for "girl power" is repackaged into the Spice Girls; Nirvana's commercial success leads to the (re)marketing of "punk" in flavors like Green Day, the Offspring, and Blink 182.

The other book was Anne Elizabeth Moore's *Unmarketable*. Her argument is more original and more disturbing. While Hebdige examined the ways the mainstream both sanitized the underground and raided it for new ideas and products, Moore tracked the ways in which elements in the DIY community willingly participate in the mainstream's assimilation of the underground. An illustrative example is the skateboard punks who ended up working for Nike and created a marketing campaign that blatantly (and illegally) ripped off the classic Minor Threat album cover in order to sell Nike shoes. (It was even called Major Threat, for crap's sake.) Moore's argument is that marketing in Western society has become so ubiquitous that DIY punks often become willing pawns of corporate capitalism with shocking ease. For her, the assault on *integrity* is intense and it requires constant vigilance to protect the core ethos of the DIY punk underground.

You see where this is going, don't you?

The sale of Punknews and those other three "punk" sites embody the arguments of both of those books. Punknews was founded by Aubin Paul back in 1998. I should stress that I don't know the dude at all—or anyone else who works there. Nor have I been to that site more than a handful of times in all the years. The few times I did I was struck by the notion that it was a wolf-in-sheep's-clothing: a marketing platform draped in the symbols and rhetoric of the DIY underground. The site employed the language of "community" and ran articles on solidly independent DIY punk bands, mixed with advertisements for major corporations and reviews of major label "punk" bands. There

were words and ideas I recognized and cherished. However, they were bandied about in a context that not only made me uncomfortable, but seemed to undercut the value and honesty of the words and the speaker. When I got down to it, there seemed to be a marked lack of ...what is that word? Oh yeah... *integrity*.

So the decision by Punknews to sell out to Buzzmedia, now the fourth largest digital publisher of music content in the U.S. and owner of *Spin* magazine (jaysus, that is still in print but *Punk Planet* isn't? There is no justice), Stereogum, and countless other products that I have no idea about, didn't come as a surprise. Okay, I'm not being totally honest. It was a moderate surprise because I thought they sold out a long time ago.

It is an old chestnut, but actions *do* speak louder than words. Entities like Punknews might wrap themselves in the rhetoric of the DIY punk community, but their decision to be a marketing platform for corporate capitalism shows that their talk has been hollow for quite some time.

You'd think they wouldn't be interested in a DIY punk underground full of misfits not known for their excess of disposable income. But you'd be wrong. As Hebdige's book *Subculture* illustrated, corporate capitalism is always happy to work its way into the underground to maximize profits wherever it can. So it is no surprise that Buzzmedia wanted access to those Punknews consumers. And as Moore's *Unmarketable* makes painfully clear, integrity has become a cheap commodity in society at large, even within the DIY community.

If I know not to be surprised by such developments as Punknews selling out to Buzzmedia, why do I care? What does it matter to me?

Hebdige argues subcultures that challenge the status quo—like DIY punk—will inevitably face three options: become incorporated into the dominant culture as a safe commodity, disappear completely, or become marginalized. All too often, people tend to think only within those first two options: sell-out or cease to function. That's the current business mentality privileged in America: "You're like a shark. If you're not moving and feeding, you'll die." But I'm putting my faith in the third option, because the margins are where the DIY punk community thrives. We're not on the outside, somehow separate from the capitalist culture that dominates society. We are at the margins. And there can be power in the margins. There can be integrity in the margins. Alternative cultures and, dare I dream, oppositional strategies can be nurtured in the margins. Those are the things that can be found in the marginalized DIY punk community.

When people wrap themselves in the robe of DIY punk and then sell them off to the highest bidder, it cheapens it for the rest of us. It makes integrity that much more scarce and open for corruption. It compromises life in the margins, making it more precarious and harder to nurture alternatives and opposition.

No matter how you cut it, Punknews and their ilk exploited the DIY punk community for financial enrichment. For those of us who take the ethos of DIY punk seriously—not as a marketing strategy nor as a commodified "life-style"—we now have to work harder to protect the value and integrity of what we hold dear.

But don't worry; we'll continue to do our part.

Kevin Dunn teaches politics at a small college in New York state. He regularly publishes on various aspects of world politics, including global punk culture.



There can be *power* in the margins. There can be *integrity* in the margins.

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE

Adam Bowers

- Owen, *At Home with Owen*
- *Permagrin: The Music of Justin Veatch*
- Propagandhi, *Failed States*
- P.S. Eliot, *Sadie*
- Tig Notaro, *Live*

Aphid Peewit

- Poison Idea, *The Fatal Erection Years* CD
- Friends Of Dorothy, *Too Perverted for Sex 7"*
- The Lewd, *Kill Yourself...Again*, CD
- *Pity the Billionaire* by Thomas Frank (book)
- *Hardcore Zen Strikes Again* by Brad Warner (book)

Art Ettinger

- Patriot, *The Spirit of Rebellion* LP
- Federation X, *The Only Fool Is You 7"*
- School Jerks, Self-titled LP
- Audacity, *Mellow Cruisers* LP
- The Dollyrots, Self-titled LP

Bill Pinkel

- Red Dons, *Ausländer 7"*
- Young Guv & The Scuzz, *A Love Too Strong 12"*
- Muhammadali, Self-titled LP
- Occult Detective Club / Something Fierce, Split 10"
- Nervosas, Self-titled 7"

Bryan Static

- Neon Piss, Self-titled LP
- King Tuff, Self-titled LP
- Nervosas, *Rev 45*
- Various Artists, *The Thing That Ate Larry Livermore* LP
- Capitalist Kids, *Lessons on Love, Sharing, and Hygiene* LP

Chris Terry

1. Staring Problem 7"
2. Prince, live

3. THEEsatisfaction, live
4. *Pym*, novel by Mat Johnson
5. *Struggling to Surface*, play by my students in juvie

Christina Zamora

Top 5 Awesome Fest 666 Moments

1. Siren Songs at Soda Bar on Friday (orgy optional) & Mind Spiders at Bar Eleven on Friday.
2. Used Kids at Soda Bar on Saturday.
3. Bananas at Bar Eleven on Saturday.
4. Masked Intruder at U31 on Sunday.
5. Spending AF666 with my Eric and completing another successful AF with some of my favorite friends ever! THANK YOU ALL!

Craven Rock

1. *Flying into the Chandelier* (zine)
2. Arms Aloft, Fault Lines, Yogurt Brain at my buddy Zach's house in Oakland
3. *From Death to Morning*, by Thomas Wolfe (book)
4. Jimmy Cliff, *Rebirth*
5. *Pulphead: Essays*, by John Jeremiah Sullivan (book)

Daryl Gussini

- Red Dons, live (twice in two days) + *Ausländer 7"* (Thanks for annihilating the post-AF depression.)
- Criminal Code, *Hollowed 7"*
- Brokedowns, *The / Wide Angles*, Split 7"
- Custody Battle 10" + live
- Black Wine, *Hollow Earth* LP

Denise Depaolo

Top 5 Fests in Sioux Falls This Year

1. Oddfest
2. 605 Summer Classic
3. 44 Fest
4. JazzFest
5. RibFest

Designated Dale

1. Stains, Charm Machine, and The Hellers at The Redwood 9/25/12—Raging in downtown L.A.
2. Christopher Titus' podcast, tituspodcast.com—Shit's pretty funny and Nerd Punk keeps it real.
3. Razorcake's continuing guest podcasts that offer a bitchin' cross-section of what we're all about: razorcake.org/podcast
4. Marc Bolan of T.Rex's short-lived *Marc* show, all up and streaming on YouTube. Although it only ran for six weeks before his fatal car crash, it showcased some awesome talent including Bolan himself, David Bowie, The Jam, and Generation X.
5. Food boners. Hell, yeah.

Ever a.k.a. The Girl About Town

1. We Got Power, art exhibit and show with Adolescents, Saccharine Trust, The Last, White Flag, and Dead Issue
2. Los Straight Jackets at the Echoplex
3. F.Y.P., Four Letter Words, Death Hymn #9, and Maniac at the Blue Star
4. Young Guv & The Scuzz, *A Love Too Strong 12"*
5. Daylight Robbery, *Ecstatic Vision* LP

George Rager

Top 5 Record Scores of Summer 2012

1. Michiro Endo, 破産
2. Night Birds, *Midnight Movies* West Coast Tour 7" (#28/70)
3. Poison Idea, *Darby Crash Rides Again* (blue/black marble vinyl) / *Pick Your King* (red/cream vinyl)
4. Bizarros, *Complete Collection 1976-1980*
5. Radio Birdman, *Hot Rails to Hell* (#49/500, color vinyl)

Jennifer Federico

Top 5 Oldies

but Goodies (British):

- "Boredom" by The Buzzcocks (1976)
- "Promises Promises" by Generation X (1978)
- "Love in a Void" by Siouxsie And The Banshees (1979)

- "Liar" by The Damned (1979)
- "Grinding Halt" by The Cure (1979)

Joe Danna

5 Awesome Fest Things

1. Best band I've been waiting forever to see: Are you fucking kidding me? Marked Men!
 2. Most "I feel like I'm in a huge warm hug" moment was a tie: Worthwhile Way's whole set and The Bananas leading us all in an acapella version of "Nautical Theme"
 3. Best Cover Song Moment: Comedian, Kyle Kinane, whistling the loudest during French Exit's cover of Katy Perry's "Teenage Dream"
 4. Best band I didn't know much about: Neighborhood Brats made every band look like a bunch of WIMPS.
 5. Best Comedy set was a TIE: Kyle Kinane and the Maxies made fun of everybody.
- 5.5 I wish I could mention EVERY BAND! Best Awesome Fest EVER! (You can leave this out if you need to, Daryl.)

Joe Evans III

Top Five Awesome Fest Highlights

- Sass Dragons
- Kyle Kinane
- Fleshes
- Pu\$\$y Cow
- Lipstick Homicide

Katie Dunne

Top 5 Things about Reading Frank Herbert's Dune

5. Finally getting so many references.
4. Never seeing the movie so you can imagine Sting as Piter, which makes a lot more sense.
3. Bene Gesserit = perfect Halloween costume
2. Getting to nerd out with almost everyone.
1. The word "dukeling."

Keith Rosson

Top 5 Novels of the Past Few Months

- *Dog Soldiers*, Robert Stone
- *When We Get There*, Shawna Seliy
- *Gold*, Chris Cleave

Best Awesome Fest EVER!

- *Toxicology*, Jessica Hagedorn
- *The Orphan Master's Son*, Adam Johnson

Kevin Dunn

1. Blood Buddies 7"
2. Lemuria, *2004 Demos 12"*
3. Bob Mould, *Silver Age* LP
4. Stevie Tombstone, *Greenwood* CD
5. Brooklyn #77 zine

Kurt Morris

1. Maserati, *Maserati VII*
2. Prayer Breakfast, *Family Business*
3. Merchandise, *Children of Desire*
4. Pig Destroyer, *Book Burner*
5. Dinosaur Jr., *I Bet on Sky*

Lauren Measure

Top 5 Band I'm Excited to See at Fest

1. Caves
2. Traveling
3. Gateway District
4. Cheap Girls
5. Now People

Lucky Nakazawa

1. Two new art pieces in *Giant Robot Biennale 3* at Japanese American National Museum 9/23/12 through 1/20/13.
2. Teaching comic making classes through Blue Rooster Art Supplies store.
3. One new art piece in *Have A Killer Day* group art show at Grass Hut, PDX.
4. Interacting with Praying Mantis and other large urban insects in L.A.
5. Staying alive.

Marcus Solomon

Top Five Favorite Bands I Have Never Seen Live

1. Blondie
2. Devo
3. Minor Threat
4. Dinosaur Jr.
5. Plasmatics

Mark Twistworthy

- Digger And The Pussycats, *Real Hard Time 7"*
- Sea Pinks, *Freak Waves* LP
- Boomgates, *Double Natural* LP
- Guinea Worms, *Smiles* LP
- Bob Mould, *The Silver Age* LP

Marty Play

- Two-year Clean/Sober Celebration at VLHS with RVIVR, American Lies, Dudes Night, Horror Squad, and Bonsai.

- Murmurs, *Fly with the Unkindness*
- Sass Dragons, *New Kids on the Bong* LP
- Worthwhile Way, *Love Is All* CD
- Awesome Fest 666

Matt Average

- Red Dons, live at the Blue Star Cafe, and *Ausländer 7"*
- Fraude, Atrako, Pessimist, and Los Tomados, live at the Warsaw Pad
- Spiritual Warrior, Hysterics, Grimace, Blood Buddies, Spokenest, live at the Bomb Tomb Room
- Surgeons, *Whip Them Lord 7"*
- Troubled Sleep, *Whacky Past Is Now 7"* EP

Mike Frame

1. Off! / Negative Approach, live
2. Bob Mould, *The Silver Age*
3. Redd Kross, *Researching the Blues*
4. Midnite Snaxxx, Self-titled
5. Chris Knight, *Little Victories*

Nardwuar

1. Youth Bitch, *Don't Fuck This Up* LP
2. Calvin Johnson and Nü Sensae, live in Vancouver
3. Tranzmitors, *Concrete Depression 7"*
4. White Lung, *Sorry* LP
5. Peace, *The World Is Too Much with Us* LP

Nighthawk

- The Reds losing to the Giants in the NLDS (Fuck you, Nick Toerner)
- Eating at a diner with Dave Decker in San Diego
- Mean Jeans at Awesome Fest
- Neighborhood Brats at Awesome Fest
- House Boat at Awesome Fest

Paul Comeau

1. Cognitive Dissonance, *Into Madness* LP
2. Moss Icon, Discography 2 x CD
3. Bitch Magnet, Discography 3 x CD
4. Give, "Flower Head" b/w "Kiss the Flame" 7"
5. Verse, *Bitter Clarity, Uncommon Grace* CD

Replay Dave

1. Quicksand, *Slip* LP
2. Smith Street Band, *Sunshine and Technology* LP
3. Legendary Wings, *Making Paper Hearts* LP

4. GWAR covering Kansas on The Onion AV Club
5. Kevin Seconds, *Don't Let Me Lose Ya* LP

Ronnie Sullivan

1. *IQ84* by Haruki Murakami
2. *Demons in the Spring* by Joe Meno
3. *FIFA 13*
4. "Punk Rock" Mogwai (*Come On Die Young*)
5. *Regular Show*

Russ Van Cleave

1. Grabass Charlestons, *Dale and the Careeners*
2. The Soft Boys, *Underwater Moonlight*
3. Gleam Garden, *Brilliant Nightmare*
4. Big Boys, *No Matter How Long the Line Is at the Cafeteria, There's Always a Seat!*
5. Otis Clay, *That's How It Is*

Ryan Horky

1. Thou, *To the Chaos Wizard Youth 10"*
2. Mountain Goats, *Transcendental Youth* LP
3. Phobia, *Remnants of Filth* LP
4. Cannibal Corpse, *Eaten Back to Life* LP
5. Teenage Bottlerocket, *Freak Out !* LP

Sal Lucci

1. Gonerfest 9
2. Cataracts Festival, Indianapolis, IN, August 2012
3. John Wesley Coleman—can't get enough of him!
4. Midnite Snaxxx, *You Kill Me 7"*
5. Sharp Balloons—can't get enough of them!

Sean Arenas

- Glocca Morra, *Ghoul Intentions 7"*
- Colossal Rex, *Every Place is Sacred* EP
- Hard Girls, *Isn't It Worse* LP
- La Bella, *Recomposition 7"*
- The Bananas, *The First 10 Years...* CD

Sean Koeppenick

- Halloween Punk Songs*
1. The Freeze, "Halloween Night"
 2. The Damned, "Nasty"
 3. Agent Orange, "This House Is Haunted"
 4. Lillingtons, "Zombies"
 5. Roky Erickson, "Burn the Flames"

Stephen Hart

1. Bob Mould, *Silver Age*
2. A Flock of Seagulls, live concert on Maui
3. Killing Joke, *Down by the River*
4. Born Without A Face, *Sound Recordings* (Reissue)
5. Melvins tour diary online

Toby Tober

Top 5 Movies I Have Enjoyed Recently

1. *A Separation*
2. *Give Me the Banjo*
3. *Homeland*, Season 1 (Inigo Montoya and Angela Chase team up to fight terrorism)
4. *My Perestroika*
5. *Sleepwalk with Me*

Todd Taylor

- Red Dons, *Ausländer 7"*
- Something Fierce / Occult Detective Club, *Split 10"*
- Neighborhood Brats, *Ocean Beach Party 7"*
- Various Artists, *Are You with the Band? A Collection of Female Fronted Pop-Punk LP*
- The Chantey Hook, Self-titled CDEP
- Alicja Trout / James Arthur, "Close UR Eyes" b/w "Go West Old Bastards" Split 7"

Tommy Vandervort

1. Negative Approach, Hoax, Kontaminant, and Violent End at Cobra Lounge
2. Off With Their Heads and Mikey Erg at Liars Club
3. Pegboy and Droids Attack at Liars Club
4. Arctic Flowers, *Procession*
5. Crusades, *Parables* EP

Ty Stranglehold

1. Neighborhood Brats, *Ocean Beach Party 7"*
2. Occult Detective Club, *Alright Gentlemen 7"*
3. Something Fierce / Occult Detective Club, *Split 10"*
4. The Briefs, *Singles Only 7"* box set
5. Open Relationship, *Born Weird 7"*

Vincent Battilana

- The Dead C, *Harsh '70s Reality* 2 x LP reissue
- Rat Columns, *Sceptre Hole* LP
- Tie: The Great Unwashed, *Clean out of Our Minds* LP reissue; The Clean, *Oddities* 2 x LP reissue
- Tie: Sonic Boom, *Spectrum* LP reissue; Spectrum, *Soul Kiss (Glide Divine)* LP reissue
- Bob Mould live in SF, which was one of the greatest things ever!



ACIDEZ: *Don't Ask for Permission*: LP

Killer UK82 style punk from Mexico that is a heavy take on classic Partisans or GBH. A good point of reference would be A Global Threat's first LP or *On the Front Line* by the Casualties, but even more full-on and in your face. They can actually play their instruments and the recording on this slab of wax is huge. The packaging is a little weird and there is the totally obligatory band shot on the back where the members are literally wearing their influences on their sleeves, but after flipping this thing over to the second side and realizing this record was going to shred the whole way through, the hardcore snob in me melted away and I remembered days of my youth sitting around listening to *Killer Blanks* and trying to piss off my parents for no good reason. If there's still a market for that stuff, these guys should be at the top of the pile. Why aren't they on tour with the Casualties and Anti-Flag making... thousands? —Ian Wise (Voltage, info@voltage-shop.com)

ADULTS: *Self-titled*: Cassette

The packaging here consists of a piece of paper folded around the tape and held in place with the ring from a six-pack. Pretty good. That same sense of scrappiness and using what you have is reflected in the music: nicely stomping New Orleans boom-bap punk with yowled vocals and little guitar leads here and there. It's a little scuzzy, a little frantic, and a little hard to pin down. Reminds me of all those earnest and resilient Canadian bands putting out tapes via the Sharpie Fumes Collective (Eviction Party, Key Teens, etc.). The kind of band that may never go beyond playing house shows—and may wind up being one of the raddest bands you ever see at a house show. Anyway, they've got cassettes and CD-Rs available, or you can grab this via Bandcamp, which might not be a bad idea at all. —Keith Rosson (Adults)

ANGRY SNOWMANS:***What We Do Is Festive*: LP**

I'm not really nuts about Christmas music in general, and I'm REALLY not nuts about Christmased-up punk, or any Christmas-based rock 'n' roll for that matter. You can't really punk out Christmas, and you can't really Christmas-out punk—they just don't go particularly well together (although getting punk records for Christmas is certainly all right), and don't really need to BE together, if'n you ask me. I'd just as soon listen to those songs from the Rankin-Bass Christmas specials of my youth than listen to punk songs redone in an X-mas motif, really—but,



"You probably know where this is heading. It's music by the kids who pulled apart stereos and ate aluminum foil. Drug music."

—Tim Brooks

EVENING MEETINGS: *Self-titled*; LP

that said, a lot of these songs really are pretty clever ((Black Flag's "Jealous Again" as "Joyeux Again," "Operation" by the Circle Jerks as "Decoration," and "Wasted Life" by Stiff Little Fingers as the inarguably epic "Wasted Elf")), so if you're into this sort of thing, you can buy with confidence and not bother fucking with a gift receipt. *First Toymaker to the King represent!* BEST SONG: "Wasted Elf," maybe "Decoration." BEST SONG TITLE: "What We Do Is Festive" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Although the front cover is a Yuletide take-off on the Germs album cover, the insert provides a similarly brilliant spoof of "Back From Samoa." —Rev. Nørb (Stiff Hombre)

ANGRY SNOWMANS:***What We Do Is Festive*: LP**

This is a difficult gig: a punk rock Christmas/comedy album. For example: I already hated the much-compromised modern Vandals, so when they released *Oil to the World*, I actively started hating their fans. It is against these overwhelming odds that the Angry Snowmans' *What We Do Is Festive* melts my black coal of a heart and replaces it with a blinking red Rudolf nose. They invert both punk's cynicism and Christmas's consumerism. Punk joy? Wide-eyed, child-like wonderment of a fun time of year? That's what this record is. Instead

of crooning Bing Crosby and Burl Ives, it's belligerent Bing and sauced-up Burl ripping the wrapping off the Germs, Fear, Black Flag, Zero Boys, X, Misfits, Fear, ("I Love) Christmas in the City"), and many more. It's done in a lovingly manner, extremely punk-knowledgeably, often hysterically. Overthrowing the oppressive North Pole regime never sounded so good. Play it from the day after Thanksgiving until January 1, and we've got no beef. Outside of that, the reindeer gets punched. Awesome. —Todd Taylor (Stiff Hombre)

ANTISEEN / FLAT TIRES:***Hail to the Chief*: Split 7"**

Two bands offer up their tribute to The Ramones. I will leave it a mystery as to which Ramone is on the cover, but I can tell you it is not Ritchie! Both bands do dead-on takes on their selections, but Flat Tires offer up just a little bit more grit in the kitchen. The third song is collaboration between the two bands on an Antiseen song. I endorse picking this up post haste. —Sean Koepenick (Rusty Knuckles)

ARCTIC FLOWERS: *Procession*: 12" EP

I can't be the only one who wishes that funeral songs were more catchy and less mopey. Arctic Flowers agrees. They play up early '80s goth to the hilt: quasi-Egyptian symbolism? Check. (No

ankh, but the "Eye of Horus" eyeball.) Ruins and/or druids and/or crop-circle imagery? Check. At least a couple of early Siouxsie, Bauhaus, Super Heroines, and/or 45 Grave records in heavy rotation? Check. We're in the midst of a slew of music revivals and jokes I haven't used in decades are coming back to me: What's worse than someone throwing up into your mouth? A dead person throwing up into your ears. Kidding aside—I listened to this type of stuff a lot growing up because that's how the punk/goth detente was established in the mid- to late-'80s when punk was sucking wind. The good news is that Arctic Flowers fall on the Christian Death/actual good punk band playing somber music side of the equation. They match the ooky-spooky with pumping blood and actual guitars and drums, not Casios keyboards overlaid with effects. Nice. —Todd Taylor (Self-released, distro'd by Feral Ward)

ARMADA, LA: *Self-titled*: LP

Literally I'm totally onboard with this—barbs about the shittier aspects of the modern world, including enslavement via debt, the reinterpretation of the term "organic food," the failure of capitalism, resisting the system, etc. Musically, however, I've just never been all that impressed with "hardcore" metal—as that term is used these days—and the genre really does zippo for me. Here's hoping that the seeds buried in the lyrics take root in at least a couple o' fans who *do* dig that sound, 'cause, frankly, they sure as shit ain't gonna hear about stuff like this in the mainstream media or on the current hit program on Telemundo or TV Azteca. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fat Sandwich)

BABY TEARS: *Rusty Years*: LP

Three songs into this, something sounded off. Suddenly I realized that I just may have been listening to this at the wrong speed. D'oh! At 45 RPM, this record was highly intriguing and came across like a mash-up of the Lost Sounds and Xbrrx. At 33 RPM, which I'm assuming is the intended speed, this sounds more like Francis Harold And The Holograms style noise-punk and, sometimes, like an even more unconventional Birthday Party. The lo-fi recording and the silk screened album cover convince me that this is indeed a DIY product and not just some hipster douche's self wank fest. It's an interesting listen, for sure. I just wish it was meant to be played at 45. —Juan Espinosa (Rainy Road / Doom Town)

BAD COYOTES: *Self-titled*: 7"

Dudes wearing leather jackets. Everybody changing their last name to

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the name of the band. (In this case just "Coyote." I'm assuming for brevity's sake. "Bad Coyote" would be a stupid-ass fake last name.) I'm guessin' before I even throw this thing on the turntable, that this is gonna be a little bit Ramones-influenced. Really it's more like blues-influenced oldies turned up to eleven and played kinda shitty. (Or, uh, "lo-fi." Whichever.) Sometimes it sounds like a bad Misfits bootleg. Not all that great. —Ryan Horky (Eli's Mile High, elismilehigh.com)

BANGERS / WHAT-A-NIGHTS: Split 7"

Two songs from each band here. Bangers: A three piece, featuring strong, somewhat gravelly vocals. The tunes are played at a comfortable, fairly easy pace. Good guitar work, backed up by a rhythm section that doesn't slouch. In the liner notes, it says that these songs were recorded live. Unless there was no one there, I would say that it means the songs were recorded live in a studio, and not at a club. What-A-Nights: Four Japanese dudes playing upbeat punk songs. Nice guitar leads stand out on the B Side. The cover art features somewhat of a blob character coming after people. Good shit. —Nighthawk (Drunken Sailor / Snuffly Smiles)

BITCH MAGNET: Discography: 3 x CD

Another short-lived band with a long-felt influence, Bitch Magnet formed in the late '80s and released two LPs and an EP before parting ways in 1990. Its members went on to form Seam, Squirrel Bait, and to play in an array

of other bands. Temporary Residence Ltd., has collected the band's entire recorded history into a triple gatefold, triple CD set remastered for this release. Included here are the band's three official releases, plus a number of rare and previously unreleased alternate versions. Musically, Bitch Magnet sound to me like the lost blueprints to much of the '90s rock that took both the underground and the mainstream by storm in that decade. They have rawness and grit—calling to mind noise rock and grunge—while also having a melodic, emotive quality that surely helped shape what became '90s emo. The tracks from their *Star Booty* 12" EP and the handful of alternate versions collected together on disc three of this set were my favorite tracks, but I found this entire discography to be totally enjoyable even after numerous listens. Bitch Magnet probably influenced every band you like, so do yourself a favor and check them out. You won't be disappointed. —Paul J. Comeau (Temporary Residence, annapaz@temporaryresidence.com)

BIZARROS:

Complete Collection 1976-1980: 2 x LP

Like fellow Akronites Devo and the Rubber City Rebels, The Bizarros twisted and wrenched rock'n'roll's standard conventions into all kinds of interesting, idiosyncratic directions. Operating during a time when the landscape of what was later called "punk" and "the new wave" was still very much open to new ideas and sounds, they melded together a potpourri of different influences both contemporary

and from previous decades—traces of psychedelia, rock, the Voidoids, the Velvet Underground and, yes, even Devo can be found with a little scratching at the surface—to create a sound in step with the times, but still very much their own, and topped with a vocalist well aware that a snide sneer is often more effective than a shout. Collected here are assorted tracks from their sole album, singles, live recordings, and later demos for a never-to-be-recorded second album. Though some of this stuff was released on a major, Mercury, like so many bands that failed to safely fall within one of punk/new wave's rapidly shrinking, ridiculously rigid pigeonholes, they quickly went the way of the dodo and have wallowed in the "who?" section of collector-geek limbo ever since. Hopefully, this collection will give 'em a proper dusting off and place 'em back on the shelf for those with the (in my opinion, proper) attitude that punk is about being different from the pack o' punters to appreciate yet another group of, well, bizarros who weren't afraid to dance to the beat of their own drum. —Jimmy Alvarado (Windian)

BLACK DOTS: Again and Again: LP

When a baby's born, I can't help but think about the parents. Are they ready? Do they know what they're getting into? Is that kid sorta fucked or sorta blessed? Same goes with bands where you already know their genealogy before the needle hits the groove. April Froshchneider was/is in Vena Cava. John was in The Achievement: two so-honest-it-aches bands that I've spent

weeks-worth of spins listening to over the years. Black Dots sounds like a wise democracy that's figured out its infrastructure before putting up flashing signage. Three principle songwriters. Two principle singers—vacillating between Florida ex-pat Wade and John—topically ranging from teenage depression-cutting to "the journey vs. the top of the mountain" headspace of an isolated band playing in Denver. In the background, on the blacktop in the distance, I hear Rumbleseat, Tim Version, long drives to find sympathetic souls, and small, semi-hidden tattoos being way more meaningful than sleeves of brightly-colored ink. Like little black dots. Worth seeking out. —Todd Taylor (blackdotrock@gmail.com)

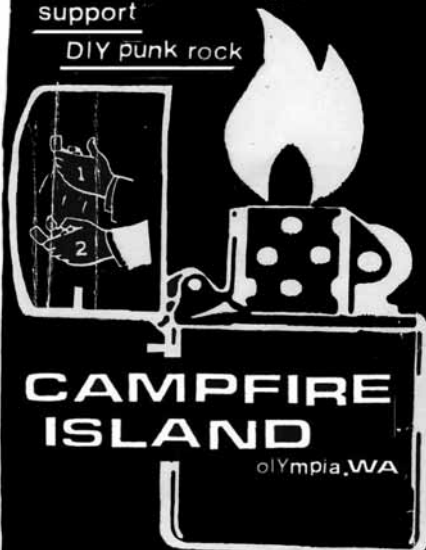
BLACK WINE: Hollow Earth: LP

When Black Wine released their first LP it felt fresh and different, but still incredibly reminiscent of (for lack of a better word) early '90s college rock. But a couple years and a couple full-lengths later, all Black Wine remind me of is Black Wine. The multiple voices and songwriters have spawned a beautiful beast. Miranda can slow it all down without losing you, I can speed it up and keep it catchy, and Jeff nails it every time he gets the chance. A list of influences will only get you so far. Black Wine never turned back. Play this record for your friends are and see which ones are cool. —Daryl (Don Giovanni)

BLAG'GARD: Fresh Candy: CD

Sounds like half of Mission Of Burma, but i'd be hard-pressed to tell you

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exactly which half. Not sure why there's a shapely orange-haired waif bare-ass naked save a strategically-placed Stratocaster on the cover, but I guess it all makes sense once you cop a squint at the band photo on the interior. **BEST SONG:** "Integrity" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Candy Town" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Cover model has one orange fingernail and the rest just have blue ends. Yes, that is the best I could do. —Rev. Nørb (Pig Zen Space)

BLOCKHEAD: Self-titled: Cassette

This tape contains a righteous slab of D.R.I.-inspired punk. Pissed, thrash-sounding hardcore with Spike-like vocals. The band does not like cancer, hypocrites, or bullshit. There is a Blockhead theme song and a blank side so you can tape your favorite companion songs. Everything a demo needs. Definitely a good buy for your old school friends. —Billups Allen (Self-released)

BLOODLOSS: Lost My Head for Drink: LP

According to the included info, this is apparently the heretofore unreleased final album by sorta supergroup comprised of members of Mudhoney, Lubricated Goat, and Monkeywrench, originally record in 1996 and left to rot until 2010. Given the personnel involved, I imagine it'd be a surprise to no one that the music here is bluesy, sludged-out stuff—albeit pristinely scrubbed of any excess sonic abrasiveness—that fits in many

pigeonholes, yet comfortably in none: grunge, punk, sludge, noise rock, yes and no to all the above. Is it worth a listen? Yes, surprisingly. A thousand of 'em out there, so start scrambling'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirty Knobby)

BLOWBACK:

Greed Runs the Clock: 7" EP

Remember hearing a prior release and not thinkin' much either way about it. This, however, is an entirely different matter. Four tracks here of well-executed punk/hardcore that bounces from one tempo to the next and to the next in complex shifts while a singer makes astute observations about the state of American culture. At different times throughout, I'm hearin' bits of Really Red, Articles Of Faith, and a few others buried in here and there. Kudos and backslaps all 'round; good, good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (String Break, stringbreak.com)

BROKEDOWNS, THE / WIDE ANGLES: Split: 7"

New Brokedowns songs are always welcome in these parts. You gotta keep up with how they're gonna turn the gruff punk genre on its head. Song structure? Fuck it. Who shackled us up in these verse / chorus / verse / bridge / double chorus chains anyways? I hear a new album is in the works, but until then check out the three tracks on this 7". Innovative and catchy, like if D. Boone grew up listening to D4 and Tiltwheel. Wide Angles also know how to hold it down with honest, heartfelt

melodic punk that pines but never whines. These songs leave you wanting more, which is good 'cause it looks like they also have an LP coming out soon. —Daryl (Cassette Deck)

BUKKAKE BOYS: Self-titled: LP

Straightforward fastcore from this Atlanta band that plays like you would expect from them at this point. It flows together as an album well and the songs are played at a pace that makes them seem like they may just all fall over on top of each other. They get compared a lot to Japanese hardcore, and I see a direct line between them and bands like Forward, but to me this sounds more like a heavier version of Californian hardcore from the '80s. It's good to see the band finally holding their own on an LP after building a good reputation based on their live show and 7" outputs, and they churn out a few songs that are downright catchy in their frenzied pace. —Ian Wise (Sorry State)

CAPITALIST KIDS, THE: Lessons on Love, Sharing, and Hygiene: LP

Timeliness is tricky. Political ideas that are topical can seem silly in time, but that can be ignored if songs are written with music that stands on its own. Nobody complains about how outdated the references are in Dead Kennedys songs, right? Aiming for the sweet spot between Propagandhi and Mr. T Experience, the political songs match the love songs about one to one. Perfect for when you can't decide between Bracket or Crass. I've listened

to this record half a dozen times before Razorkake ever sent me a copy, so I'm probably the most qualified person to take a whack at this. I've been around this record for a while. I've overheard conversations between band members as they talked about these songs before the band had learned them and I've seen the songs played a handful of times before the recordings got made. At this point, I feel like I know this record like the back of my hand. The pop punk community should be happy that a band like the Capitalist Kids is playing right now. This isn't me giving the old argument of "what happened to the politics in punk rock?" It's always been there, it's just been in the pop punk section of the store. In a section of rock dominated by songs about youthful nostalgia and partying, I hope the Capitalist Kids spark arguments. I hope they get people talking who don't normally like to think about these kinds of things. If you like tight Lookout-styled pop punk, these guys are some of the hottest shit on the market. Get with it. —Bryan Static (Toxic Pop, toxicpoprecords.com)

CHANTEY HOOK, THE: Self-titled: CDEP

Romantic, driving, poetic rock'n'roll is tough. Tough to not be maudlin. Tough to not be cheesy. Tough to not rip off the intellectual property estates of Bruce Springsteen or Neil Young. Thoughtful, dynamic, evocative, story- and romance-driven punk is even tougher. Leatherface's ghosts and fingerprints are on the edges of The Chantey Hook. But they're leagues

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apart from a band that zips itself into a Leatherface suit as easily as a banker sleeves into a pressed shirt. I have a longtime respect for Seth Swaaley, the singer and principal songwriter of Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission, now Chantey Hook. As it is with any music-with-meaning, this CD benefits from close listens and read-alongs. If you take time with it, let the relationship build under moss-bricked bridges, during loose-cylinder drives, when "the struggle's always near, but the party's always on," that's when The Chantey Hook shares. It won't give you everything on the first time around the block. It's not that easy. The gift The Chantey Hook delivers in four songs is nothing short of that reminder that humans make music and music can sometimes be wonderfully redemptive. "We'll get there, but we ain't there just yet." —Todd Taylor (thechanteyhook.com, music@thepersistenceofsound.com)

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE:

Into Madness: LP

Cognitive Dissonance has been shredding faces for several years now, both on the road and on recording. They've managed to capture the blistering intensity of their live set on this, their most recent LP. Cognitive Dissonance plays raw, heavy crust with a strong tinge of black metal. *Into Madness* features seven new songs and a rerecording of an early song, "Omens of Doom," from the tape of the same name. There's just the right mix of grit

and polish on this recording, capturing the band's live experience without losing one note of their great riffs and nonstop shredding. "Repercussions" and "Remain" were two tracks whose riffs I particularly enjoyed. Lyrically, the band is on point, with sharp lyrics conveying green, anarchist, and DIY punk ethics in straightforward and relatable language. I particularly enjoyed the lyrics to "Manufactured Genocide" for its challenge to eating meat. Not only is this record excellent musically, but it also features great liner notes in the form of a black and white printed zine. Lyrics to each song are provided, along with commentary, as well as some badass looking photos and art by an array of talented artists. This keeps finding its way back onto my turntable for repeated listens, and you should do yourself a favor and get it on your turntable as soon as possible. I can't recommend it enough. —Paul J. Comeau (Ecophagy, ecophagylv@gmail.com, piratefrontier@hotmail.com)

CONFINES: Some Sick Joke: 7"

Second 7" from these totally underrated Boston thrashers. I think I recognize the first two songs from their demo tape, but the flip side is a brand new, twisting, angry dirge that is reminiscent of Black Flag but has that sort of attitude that is awkward, but somehow still confident, that reminds me of the AmRep catalog. The lyrics are excellent, as I've come to expect from the band and the singer's previous stint with Cut The Shit. I like that the band is very open politically

and covers important topics without relying on rhetoric or clichés. They discuss punk and activism as things that are intrinsic and important to each other. There's a recurring theme in their releases of passion within punk causing disillusionment because their expectations are so high, but the anger is coupled with an urgent need to progress their surroundings by pushing harder rather than giving up. Punk viewed in this light is—for lack of a better term—almost spiritual and viewed as something that is valid even if marred. This is the best hardcore record I've heard so far this year and it's going to be hard to top, but that's the point, right? These guys are just setting the bar higher to see who has the audacity to jump. —Ian Wise (Labor Of Love)

CONNIPTION FITS: Street Songs: CD

Some good old, straight-up boots, spikes, and mohawk punk. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Vocalist Jessie Vile spits out venom with her lyrics that match the relentless jackhammer of the music. I'd love to see them play. —Ty Stranglehold (Rockin' Stan)

CRIMINAL CODE: Hollowed: 7"

Pumped up, yelly, Wipers-inspired hardcore punk outta the Tacoma/Seattle area. Relentless and emotional—with two separate guitarists each approaching the song in their own unique way—Criminal Code creates an addictive combination of penetration and fuzz. All packaged in minimalist cover art. Prepare to

give yourself a couple minutes to come down after listening to this record. —Daryl (Deranged)

CUSTODY BATTLE: Self-titled: 10"

Flagstaff, AZ's Custody Battle come out of nowhere, swinging with both fists. It's catchy-punk violence to infinity and back. Wild, off-kilter songs with maximum shredditude. Silk-screened covers, hand stamped labels, self-recorded, self-released (?), this is "DIY or DIE" in the flesh. This is Arizona's San Pedro punk played by weirdoes for weirdoes. Bizarre house party ruckus played by guys who have probably spent a decent amount of time playing in straight-up metal bands. The surprise band of the summer. Get into it. —Daryl (Morning Star)

CYNARAE: Self-titled: LP

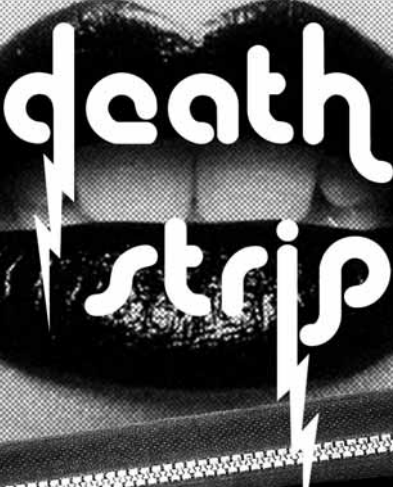
Holy shitballs. Total '90s Bremen hardcore worship ala Morser, Systral, and Carol, with a hearty dose of the same era's Canadian counterparts (Uranus, One Eyed God Prophecy, Drift, Jonah, et al). Heavy, chaotic, melodic, evil, and just pummeling. This is so up my alley that it almost feels unfair to review it. My only "complaint" is that it should be about five times as long. Incredible. —Dave Williams (A389, a389records.com)

DANI BAND TRAVELING BAND:

Shut Up & Go Die!: CD

Using a variety of tropes across the spectrum of punk (including a ska song), Dani Band delivers a one man

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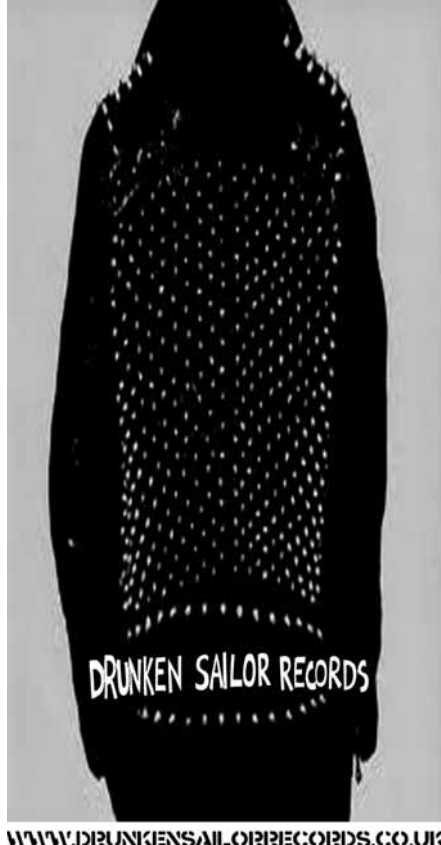
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EP of varied delivery. In all honesty, I'm not familiar with Dani Band. I think he's in Mall'd To Death, and if that's correct this EP isn't terribly removed from that school of punk. This disc normally works like an Osker record and branches out from there. It's a very personal record that shows its sole performer showing off all of his talents. Some tracks work much better than others, but as a project that's not necessarily trying to be anything other than a personal record, this is quite formidable. —Bryan Static (Self-released)

DEVIAED INSTINCT: *Liberty Crawls... 12"*

I have to admit that I wasn't the biggest fan of the band back in the late '80s. I only have the *Guttural Breath* LP, which hasn't been spun in probably over twenty years. When I heard the band was touring the West Coast a couple of years ago, I was intrigued. I was going to check them out. Also, I had corresponded with their guitarist Mid through the internet, which made it more appealing to meet him in person. I caught the first day of the tour and was floored by the sheer power of the music. They were way better than I remembered from that LP from years past. It worked out that I would be in the Bay Area a few days later to celebrate my birthday and caught them. Once again, it was no fluke and they killed it. I was officially a new fan. A band whose last release was over twenty years ago comes back with a 4-song EP that shows why they are regarded as one of the forefathers of crust. It's a release I would have easily

dismissed, seeing as so many reformed bands have not been able to perform to the level of their status in punk rock history. But Deviated Instinct bring elements of both punk and metal and perform it with precision and ferocity. Vocalist Leggo delivers the lyrics with a harsh and charged delivery. Mid shows that his guitar playing has matured and charges forth with his bar chord fury. Bassist Snapa pounds out the low notes and provides that cohesiveness to push the music. Rounding of this collective is Tony on drums—who I witnessed first-hand—hard hit with a fury to drive home the message. From the musicianship, the production, and to the mastering, this record has that power that appeals to my ears, even though I have been on a different kick lately genre-wise. It one of those records that really gets me pumped up when I listen to it. I was so giddy about this record I also bought the European release just to see if I could hear sound differences due to different pressing plants. That is my next project for the nerd in me to explore. —Donofthead (Profane Existence)

DICKS, THE: *These People*: CD

It's not easy under any circumstance for a band to pick up pretty much where it left off when—for some reason or another—an entirely new lineup needs to be recruited. Add to the mix that the previous lineup was in itself a legendary powerhouse responsible for some of the finest punk rockin' put to wax and the odds get better for you getting hit by a giant meteor made of salamander

poop than it is to match, let alone top, your game. While *These People* does fall just shy of the benchmark set by previous works, it is by no means a bad album. More than anything else, I would say its shortcomings lie more in the production than songwriting or execution. Here, the thuddy sound that SST house producer Spot utilized to great effect in showcasing the band's gritty blues undertow on *Kill from the Heart* is replaced with Klaus Fluoride's more trebly sonic environment, one that worked well for Dead Kennedys, but here sounds much too sterile. One need look no further than the tracks from the *Peace?* single attached on this reissue to hear the difference. Outside of that, the album showcases a band that may not have quite exceeded the brilliance of the original lineup, but it handily picks up where their predecessors left off and—if this record serves as any indication—were on their way to some interesting uncharted waters had they not decided to throw in the towel. Bands with the fearlessness, and flat-out greatness, the Dicks displayed are hard to come by, and thanks are due to Alternative Tentacles for making their music again available. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

DIME RUNNER: *Recharged Rejects*: 7"

Snotty punk rock and Orange County, California go hand in hand. Dime Runner fits the bill nicely. The over-the-top swagger of The Stitches or Broken Bottles comes to mind, but not in a rip off kind of way. It's natural. The title track

nails it then they close it out with a Joy Division cover. My only complaint is that I want more. —Ty Stranglehold (Wanda)

DINOSAUR JR.: *I Bet on Sky*: CD/LP

Dinosaur Jr.'s third album in their re-united form, and their second for Jagjaguwar, continues to show that their reunion is no fluke. While *I Bet on Sky* is likely the band's cleanest sounding album, it by no means signals the band mellowing. The group's signature sound of '90s college rock mixed with J Mascis's guitar solos continues to work. Interestingly, the ten songs on here include two tracks penned by bassist Lou Barlow (Sebadoh, Folk Implosion), with him on vocals. However, these songs, too, contain Mascis guitar solos. Like the cleaner music, Mascis's vocals are also fresh—there's no scratch in his voice and, instead, there is just his mellow delivery. Lest there be any doubt, Dinosaur Jr.'s still got it: songs like "Watch the Corners" and "Pierce the Morning Rain" are solid rockers and just as good as most of the band's material from their earlier years. While it would be hard to imagine any Dinosaur Jr. album topping the magic of *You're Living All Over Me*, *I Bet On Sky* shows a band that knows how to age gracefully. —Kurt Morris (Jagjaguwar)

D.O.A.: *We Come in Peace*: CD

It should go without saying that D.O.A. is a legendary band, responsible for classic albums like *Something Better Change* and *Hardcore '81*. They're even credited with originating the



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term "hardcore" to define the second wave of North American punk music. Beyond those early releases, I also have a fondness for their more mainstream, rock-sounding 1985 album *Let's Wreck the Party*, and an appreciation for the populist political perspectives reflected in the band's lyrics. With *We Come in Peace* vocalist/guitarist Joey "Shithead" Keithley and company return with an album brimming with political fervor and a slew of guest performers including Jello Biafra, Ben Kowalewicz, Hugh Dillon, and more. While I can easily get down with the political messages, and love hearing Biafra's voice on any recording, overall I found this to be mostly boring mid-tempo melodic punk, spiced up at times with moments of street punk and punk'n'roll-sounding parts. There's even a very ska sounding track, "Walk through This World." Which takes me to my biggest complaint about this album: there's not much cohesion to it. It sounds to me more like a compilation of bands trying to be D.O.A. than it sounds like the band trying to be themselves. One place where the band does succeed is in their rendition of The Beatles' "Revolution." While cheesy, I think D.O.A. made a better go of it than most bands, punking it up and making it their own. While I appreciate the lyrical themes present on this recording, I expected more from this. —Paul J. Comeau (Sudden Death)

DOOM GHOST / WAR PARTY: Split: 7"

A new release from Turkey Baster Records, who I don't remember seeing

anything from for a while after their Texas punk output in the late '90s. Both bands play lo-fi garage stuff of the sort that Mortville Records used to release. —Mike Frame (Turkey Baster)

DOPAMINES: Vices: CD

Well, I guess it's about time I have an opinion on this band one way or the other. I met the Dopamines once. They were playing the back patio of a bar in San Antonio and I told one of the Jons how my friend wanted to come down because he loved the line "drink a little sake and get a little cocky." The Jon looked me at me, pondered seriously for a moment, and tried to remember if that was actually a lyric that they really sang at one point. This anecdote illustrates the ridiculous, but forgettable, quality about the early parts of their discography. The earlier records had moments that stand as great pop punk moments, where others stand in mediocrity. If I put money on it, I would probably say this is the best thing I've ever heard by them. As someone who's been watching them since their debut years ago, this is the first records of theirs that I could see coming back to more than half a dozen times. For the longest time, it had to do with the fact that the Copyrights filled the same basic functions as the Dopamines, but I think this album marks the official point where I can really say that a band can sound like the Dopamines or The Copyrights, with clear distinguishing marks between the two. —Bryan Static (It's Alive, itsaliverecords.com)

DOUBLE NEGATIVE: Hits: 7" EP

Focusing less attention to the thrashy, "Poison Idea" side of their equation in favor of a more "Black Flag"-tinged approach, Double Negative dish up three tracks of churning, grating hardcore like only they can. According to Sorry State's site, this is the last recordings with vocalist KC and the first with new drummer Bobby. Should be interesting to hear where they go from here, 'cause this is already pushing quite nicely against the boundaries they've already established for themselves. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

DOWNTOWN STRUTS: Victoria!: CD

Chicago band's new release is a breath of fresh air from the current crop of records flooding the market. Elements of The Clash and The Replacements pop up in small doses. But the band's songwriting skills are evident on each song. "Back to N.Y." and "Mexican Graffiti" should have fans singing along to the words in no time. A solid album that will hopefully make a big splash. —Sean Koepenick (Pirates Press)

DRIPFEED: Unit B Sessions: Cassette

Crust is in a fucking coma. Pull the plug. —Craven Rock (Less Art)

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING / THE UV RACE: Split: LP

Recorded at Missing Link Records, Melbourne in 2008 and originally released in a three-hundred run of cassettes through Mikey Young's

Aarght label, this is an awesome-sounding live set by two of Australia's finest bands. As one who celebrates the entire ECSR catalog (that's available in the States, which is all but the earliest singles), I'm stoked. Live energy and on-point playing make up for brief lapses in fidelity (as should be expected and embraced for any authentic live recording). The day the egg cracked for me with ECSR was a long desert drive with *Primary Colors* on repeat in the player. The songs stood up to the large vistas; painted them. The blip-blip of close-by cacti matched the tick of the guitar. That's a lot of space and time to fill without being bored. The UV Race don't slouch. More blunt and harder than their compatriots, yet distinctly in the loosely defined New Wave of Australian Garage Rock (NWOAGR), it's a great pairing of two brother bands. It's rare that I'll say that both completists and folks new to the bands can rejoice over a live record. In this case, it's true. Cool stuff. I'm glad it got the vinyl treatment. —Todd Taylor (Almost Ready)

EFFLUXUS: Life Destruction: LP

This album is as simple as rice and beans, yet as crusty as a two-week-old baguette. Gymnasium vocal effects with doomsday lyrics and uptuned Tragedy riffage. Song titles like "Shadows of the Sun," "Darkness," and "Desolation." Fans of malt liquor, industrial wastelands, and amateur quilting will enjoy this head banger. —Matthew (Headache Hardcore)

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EVENING MEETINGS: Self-titled: LP

Some kind of Northwestern super group with heads from the A Frames, Lights, and Intelligence; you probably know where this is heading. It's music by the kids who pulled apart stereos and ate aluminum foil. Drug music. Multilayered fuzzed out jams... feedback... drunken, slurred vocals. Kinda like the UV Race from Oz...or hell, the Gun Club for an easy reference. The ex punks lap this shit up... same people who went gaga over Hozac. I get it... but where's the hooks, maaaaaan? —Tim Brooks (Sweet Rot)

FAKE BOYS, THE: Pig Factory: LP

Pure radio rock. Moments of competent songwriting mixed in with bits that remind me of why mainstream rock records are unappealing. I truly detest the production. The moment when this record lost me was when the guitar pulled itself to the forefront of a particular song and all the other instruments dropped out. All alone, the guitar decides to go into a flanger-induced blender noise that just made me think of the Foo Fighters. I get that the band is trying to go for a Dinosaur Jr./Hüsker Dü alt rock sound, but the execution doesn't fit. The grit isn't there. Dinosaur Jr. works because of the noise—the levels between the vocals and the instruments. Here, the style is too clean cut. I'm sorry, but this just doesn't work. —Bryan Static (Animal Style, animalstylerecords.com)

FAKE LIMBS: Man Feelings: LP

The songs on this record fuse '90s Dischord-style staccato with pseudo-

stoner metal riffs. The singer is kind of interesting in "more hoss than vocalist" sort of way, but the music never reaches much of a pace for me. It plods along in the one Black Sabbath riff it nearly rips off note for note. The one-sheet also makes too many outrageous claims. Here are a few I agree with: "These four dudes play," "post-hardcore flavoring," "includes digital download." Here are a few things I don't agree with: "on par with the legendary likes of Jesus Lizard, Pere Ubu, and The Stooges," "finest frontman since D. Boon," "this is the record for [me]." —Billups Allen (Blvd, blvdrecords.com)

FAMILY CURSE / WHITE MURDER: Split: 7"

Hmmmm.... Family Curse crank out some wound up tighter than tight punk rock with a style that reminds me of the Tyrades, Night Birds, and more recent bands. I like it quite a bit. The energy is infectious, and I like I get pulled into it. The only thing I don't really like is the chorus of "Middle Age America." The attitude of the delivery sounds forced. Other than that, pretty good. Maybe it's something that has to grow on me, like a mold. White Murder are a little less stabby in sound, but they have a smash and burn style with a urgent delivery. Even in their tempo changes, the song flows and keeps the tension constant. Kind of like an updated version of the Bags. So fucking good! Only one song? I need to hear more. —M.Avrq (Doormat, drawingroomrecords.com)

FANG: Here Come the Cops: CD

Something has to be done. Somebody get a teletthon going. We need to eradicate the world of the terminal illness known as S.T.S. (Suicidal Tendencies Syndrome). S.T.S. overtakes once great punk rock and hardcore bands and compels them to write and release wishy-washy cheese metal. As of now, there is no known cure for S.T.S., but with your help that could change in our lifetime. Bands like Fang are counting on you. Operators are now standing by. —Ty Stranglehold (Malt Soda)

FIGGS, THE:**The Day Gravity Stopped: 2 x LP**

Though my own knowledge of their existence dates back only a couple o' years at most, The Figgs have apparently been twangin' n' sangin' for nigh on two decades and have released an impressive number of records over the years. This latest is a double album featuring twenty tracks chock full of modish pop, country twang, and points between. The tracks remain surprisingly consistent throughout, and are a bit of a treat in an era when so many wading in the pop end of the pool seem so hellbent on sounding like carbon copies of each other. —Jimmy Alvarado (Peterwalkee, peterwalkeerecords.com)

FLESH LIGHTS: Too Big to Fail: 2 x 7"

"Oh man, the Flesh Lights are awesome!" "What? Gross. You use those things?" "Uh... I meant the garage rock band." So the conversation

has gone, I'm sure, a few times as this band rises in infamy. They've put a very distinct handicap on themselves by creating a name that turns away the weak at heart and makes it hard to justify buying a T-shirt at their shows. A name like the Flesh Lights demands that your band has a hell of punch to your rock. Is it any surprise that they actually deliver? Struts like protopunk, soars like hardcore. Kind of like if the Adolescents tried to play something like Reigning Sound. Highly Recommended. —Bryan Static (Super Secret, supersecretrecords.com)


FRANTIC FLINSTONES:**Freaked Out & Psyched Out: CD**

I gotta tell ya, I don't know a hell of a lot about the world of rockabilly, or psychobilly or any of those other billies. It's not that I don't like it—because I do—I just don't go rabid for the stuff like a lot of people out there. That said, I like this disc. I can't give you any good reason. It sounds like a lot of other bands like this. They sing about zombies and drugs and... Well, that's pretty much it. —Ty Stranglehold (Drunkabilly)

FRIENDS OF CESAR ROMERO:**"Red Headed Strangler" b/w****"Tammys of Tomorrow": 7"**


Out of Phoenix, AZ, Cesar Romero's friends issue another bag of pure sunshine for your turntable. Pressed on slate gray vinyl, this single of '60s-era garage pop brings up the jangle and fancy footwork of The Strokes. With a bouncy lo-fi riff, "Red Headed

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Strangler" conjures up shag hairdos, while "Tammys of Tomorrow" rides the wave between surf and psychedelia with a dyslexic snippet of the track played backwards. Reminiscent of those lazy, hazy days of summer. They ain't on Snappy Little Numbers fer nothin'. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Snappy Little Numbers)

FROGS OF WAR: *All Said and Done*: CD

The late 1980s was an interesting time for hardcore and punk. It went from being loud, fast, and short to something a bit more tuneful, melodic, and poppy. At the time I didn't really give it much thought. Maybe it was a gradual change, or maybe I was just stoked to hear new music. Hearing and seeing how punk was growing and changing was pretty damn amazing at the time. Granted, when Frogs Of War first came on the scene, the U.K. had bands like Ripcord, Heresy, Napalm Death, and more. But these guys seemed more influenced by Snuff, and maybe Thatcher On Acid (whom they remind me of, especially on the song "U.S.A."), and bands like Soul Side, and Naked Raygun. The music is driving and catchy without being sappy or saccharine. You can hear the bass pushing everything through and the guitars riding over the top. The vocals are sung and not screamed, while the backup vocals emphasize the melodic elements. Political and social commentary without being heavy handed or blatantly obvious. This CD collects their LP (which is the title of this collection), a four song session

from 1991, and *The Gunpowder Plot Noodle* demo from 1990. It definitely sounds dated by today's interests, but that doesn't mean this is not worth listening to. As much as I love the early hardcore sound, I'm also hoping today's participants look around for different inspiration. If you're looking at what punk of the past did, you might want to look here for something a bit different from today. Glad I got this! —M.Avr (Boss Tuneage, bosstuneage.com)

GAS CHAMBER: *Modern Vision of the Erect Nightmare: 7"*

Continually pushing against boundaries and exploring the outer realms, Gas Chamber are one of those bands where I know I'm not going to hear a band do the same thing over and over again. Each record of theirs makes the past release seem puny in comparison. This may very well be my favorite from them. The noise at the beginning is excellent! Seriously, my favorite part of the song. When they kick in to the main body, they bring to mind Dystopia, but a little more direct and to the point. The vocals are shouted with a sense of pain and disgust. The second side of this record paints a scene of hell—with sounds coming in and out of the dark—and the vocals shouted with a shredded throat rasp over the din. Rightfully so, as the lyrics are bleak, detailing the fall of civilization. The acoustic playing at the end comes out of left field and is a great way to go out. It puts a very different mood on the whole thing. Excellent record, to say

the very least. —M.Avr (Nerve Altar, nervealtar.blogspot.com)

GOD GIVEN ASS:

"I'm Better than You" b/w "(Don't Mess With) Heinis Punks": 7"


About seven-eighths less glummy than one'd expect a band of such nomenclature to be, these Helsinkoids come off as a slightly more punk and less talented version of the Yum Yums, which isn't a bad place to be, really. They clearly put plenty of time and energy into trying to build the a-side into a legit sock-knocker of a hit single; problem is that the song itself really isn't exceptional enough to warrant such attention, and i can't help but wonder if the band had other songs more suited to this position of great prominence. I'm more roused by the simple territorial stompings of the B-side, augmented by traces of some kinda bagpipe-sounding thing, and surely following in the grand and glorious tradition of Finnish punk bands singing half-joking anthems about their local crew established by Kohu-63's "Harpala Kids" some thirty years ago. Good B-side, nice try on the A-side, overall results inconclusive. *More gruel, sirs! More gruel!* BEST SONG: "(Don't Mess With) Heinis Punks" BEST SONG TITLE: "(Don't Mess With) Heinis Punks" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Label spells it "Heinis PUNX," in defiance of conventions established by front and back covers. —Rev. Nørb (Hurdie Gurdie Heebie Geebie Greenie Meenie Man / No Bullshit)

HANDS LIKE BRICKS: *EP: II: CDEP*

Almost two years in and HLB crack out yet another collection of tunes to keep its L.A. fanbase and beyond raisin' fists and singin' along, beginning with the two opening tracks, "We Made This Mess" and "Beers and Cards" (which is definitely the better of the two). Think Fat Wreck Chords pogo/skate fucker-upper, but with balls. "Go Away" is the standout tune here, and for some unexplained reason, I can totally hear The Crowd re-recording a version of this—no, that's not a slag, that's a total compliment. The hit-the-gas stomper, "Satellite Phone Calls" calls to mind the leaner, meaner Social Distortion circa 1983-'84 live onstage, not to be confused with the band of the same name Mike Ness leads these days. Let's be crystal fuckin' clear here that HLB isn't at all derivative of the two above mentioned bands or label, I'm merely stating some parallels that I happen to hear when checking out this EP. And speaking of checking 'em out, this band delivers it and then some onstage, so don't fuck up and skip the chance to catch 'em next time. —Designated Dale (Modern Pop, facebook.com/modernpoprecords)

HOMEWRECKER: *Worms and Dirt*: LP

I guess this could be safely housed under the Holy Terror umbrella, but I don't want to pigeonhole it too much. I will say that this is a contender for my favorite hardcore record of the year. It's got everything I look for in a hardcore record: dark, heavy, bleak, disgusting,



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King/Hanneman leads, and songs about Satan. Toss in a tasteful use of blasts and breakdowns, an almost Disembodied-esque general feel, and a perfectly fitting layout and you've got a modern "evilcore" classic. —Dave Williams (A389, a389records.com)

HUMAN TOUCH: Self-titled: 7"

Rambunctious female-fronted hardcore. This disc chugs like a malfunctioning microwave. There are moments every once in a while that make you worry. The moments where you think, "Maybe it's not going to make it." Those whirring noises of d-beat hardcore and borderline-shrill vibrating vocal dissonance, but the job gets done. When this wax works, it's solid. In practice, I hear the same things that make bands like Night Birds and Autistic Youth awesome. —Bryan Static (One Percent Press, onepersentpress.com / Feral Kid, feralkidrecords.com)

HUNTERS, RUN!: Crows and Cranes: CD

This is a dark, dreamy album with gorgeous vocals and guitar melodies. Hunters, Run! sounds totally unique and unpretentious. —Lauren Trout (Battle Standard / At Arms)

HYGIENE: "Hygiene" b/w "Hygène": 7"

Big ol' question mark punk rock. Are they really primitive moderns channeling the Monks and Black Time? Kraut rock with beans on toast? Wire unraveling into uncomfortable, spiked strands? Sham 69 deconstructionists? Intellectual skinhead revivalists? My

guess is that they know exactly what they're doing and that confusion, obfuscation, and unanswerability are part of their concrete-small-flats-and-parka mystique. —Todd Taylor (Sorry State, yourgeneration@gmail.com)

JAMES ARTHUR / ALICJA TROUT: "Go West Old Bastards"

b/w "Close Ur Eyes": 7" Musical genres are word corrals. For people new to a genre, or mere consumers, they're helpful. Garage rock. To me, as a term—it's almost as meaningless because it's so vast and has such a rich and continuing heritage. Then there are the compartments in the corrals. The subgenres. They use hyphens and the hyphens cordon off smaller chunks of musical landscape. Mummies-inspired-proto-Crypt-rock. Gunk-punk. That sort of thing. But, as a music lover and an American who loves wide open spaces, I give thanks to artists like James Arthur and Alicja Trout. Instead of can't-turn-around-in-this-cage, I'm-going-to-die-in-here, veal-fattening pens of much of corporate-sponsored garage rock today, these two are on wildly different trips. James Arthur: best instrumental soundtrack to a movie that hasn't been made. I would like that movie to have a robot, a monkey, and a cowperson. Alicja: for those familiar with her work in Mouse Rocket and Alicja Pop, she sounds like a deconstructed "New Rose." Damned, sung with palpable heart, open artful stitches, and wide-open wonderment. Excellent pairing. —Todd

Taylor (Spacecase, spacecaserecords.com, info@spacecaserecords.com)

JAR'D LOOSE: Goes to Purgatory: CD

Metallic mid-tempo thrash with a punk edge to it: that's what this band brings to the table. The production is pretty lo-fi and the leads are pure late '80s thrash, so fans of under-produced metal will probably dig this. —Mike Frame (Cassette Deck)

JOYCE MANOR: Of All Things I Will Soon Grow Tired: CD

Joyce Manor's taste for throwing down even the briefest outline of a song on their sophomore album almost makes them come off like the pop punk Guided By Voices. This also puts the album into a weird flow. At nine songs in thirteen minutes, there are some real choice bits, like the succinct punk nuggets, "Comfortable Clothes" and "If I Needed You There." There's also the distinct-sounding "See How Tame I Can Be?" (which seemingly stole its rhythm section from a new wave band) and the jangler excursion "Bride of Usher" that change things up a bit. The couple of oddly recorded acoustic songs, "Drainage" and "I'm Always Tired," though come off as filler on such a short album. Seeing as they sound like incomplete demos or song ideas put on to bump this just barely into LP runtime, they give the proceedings a weird odds and sods feel rather than that of a coherent album. After all, I don't think *Group Sex* would work quite as well if it had a couple songs that sound like

Keith Morris about to fall asleep with a tape recorder on plopped into the album. Plus the singer sounds way too tired and sort of annoyingly apathetic when he's acoustic. He needs the balance of driving music, which makes his vocals work. Otherwise, he starts to sound like that one person who gets irritating due to how jaded they are since they have seen/done/experienced more than you can imagine (cough cough, the title of this album). All said, there is a really good EP present on here, as these guys really have the whole rapid-fire punk thing down when their running at full steam. Side-note, there's also a cover of "Video Killed the Radio Star" on here that's much raggedier and faster than the Presidents Of The United States version, but just as charming in its own way (though the original Buggles version still owns my heart). —Adrian (Asian Man, mikeparkmusic@gmail.com)

JTT: Self-titled: 7"

JTT are a band from Corvallis, OR that plays country-damaged pop punk. They're very sincere and great lyricists with songs that range from adult anger at a deadbeat dad, to a story of a lonely old man who drank himself to death, leaving the narrator wanting to pursue a better life and encouraging the listener to "hold yourself up and make your presence known." It's a pretty good and inspiring effort. It makes me feel both like the old man who wasted all his time and inspires me to think I've got a lot of time left, to not let life pass me by. —Craven Rock (Secret Pennies)



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KING TUFF: Self-titled: Cassette

Punky California beach pop. Sounds like Hunx (And His Punx) on a weed day. Burger Records have cultivated this great little sound with their acts seemingly stuck in this world where the '90s took place in the '60s—the beach bum loser aesthetic backed by the music of the proto-psychedelic rock era. The vibe lingers throughout the record and dominates the sound; I can feel the high vibrating out of my stereo's speakers. I now regret skipping his set at the Burger showcase when it came to town. Special mention to the track "Alone and Stoned," which has been stuck in my head since I first popped the tape in. Recommended. —Bryan Static (Burger, burgerrecords.org)

LARRY AND HIS FLASK:**All That We Know: CD**

Larry And His Flask is country punk band that is every bit as gimmicky as all of the Irish punk bands around. The vocals are a bad imitation of a drunken pirate, except for the parts where they sound like Bad Religion, and then they are a bad imitation of that. I know that we're past the phase of accusing bands of being over produced, but that's the best way to describe this CD. Larry and His Flask forces different combinations of banjo, trombone, piano, mandolin, and trumpet (plus complex vocal harmonies) into each song, and it's just too much. They should definitely strip it down to just what they need and drop the gimmick. —Lauren Trout (Silver Sprocket)

LIMINANAS, THE: Crystal Anis: CD

The Good: This French duo mete out some tasty, '60s-tinged tuneage, sorta like the Nico-era Velvet Underground penning the soundtrack to some sorta slinky *In Like Flym*-esque spy flick with lots of psychedelic colored orbs and rack zooms up the wazoo. The Bad: The bulk of the tunes are based on finding a groove and riding it all the way into shore, which works like gangbusters when you're talking about funk, but too often here ends up with a given song sounding like merely a rough sketch of an idea rather than a realized whole. There are also some instances where similar ideas pop up again two or three tunes down the track list, resulting in, "Wait, wasn't that just one a second ago?" moments. The Good (Slight Return): Many of its shortcomings are saved by the fact that the ideas are, in fact, good ideas, so while it may come off as unfinished in spots, it's at no point unlistenable. —Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac, hozarecords.com)

LITTLE SEIZURES, THE: Self-titled: 7" EP

Disclaimer: This is basically the new incarnation of The Shemps from New York City, who I've gone on tour with/filled in with; not to mention that ringleader Bill Florio is a close friend. (One of the songs on here almost ended up being used in our other band.) That said, musically it's the same vintage garage/soul with some punk edges to it, that doesn't take itself too seriously. (Figuratively speaking. Musically, they're not fucking around.) The biggest

change is in the new vocalist. While the voice of the Shemps was more of a hardcore-style yell, the new guy is a bit more snotty. It's a good direction to go in. So, basically, if you're into garage (and not just wearing the stupid vintage clothing), this is highly recommended. —Joe Evans III (Go Ape, fancymag.com/go-ape)

LOST SOUNDS: Lost Lost: CD

Lost Lost is a collection of Lost Sounds demos and rough mixes of songs. The fidelity of the tracks is pretty rough at times. But in some instances—such as "Black Coats/White Fear"—the out of tune vocals and coarseness of the four-track recordings enhance the songs. "Black Coats/White Fear" was recorded in 1999, when Jay was only eighteen or nineteen years old. The track has a stunning urgency to it. Jay sings with complete conviction over an acoustic guitar and sparse percussion. Whereas synth pioneers Kraftwerk celebrated European grandeur, Jay and Alicia's societal vision was, like the movie *Metropolis*, dark. Their lyrics—often focusing on an upcoming dystopia or the nervousness of contemporary society (check "Throw Away" and "Glued to the Screen")—was the inverse of Kraftwerk's celebration of machine as liberating force for mankind. The Lost Sounds had two creative heavyweights in Jay and Alicia. Knowing the pathos of Jay's life—and the psycho geography of postindustrial America—Lost Sounds was (and remains) the synth-based soundtrack for corporate

bailouts and high unemployment rates. There are some odd tracks on here too—like a cover of '60s garage song "I Cannot Lie"—and the inclusion of sound effects Jay and Alicia created but had never gotten around to using. *Lost Lost* is definitely worth having. Jay and Alicia worked well together and their music was always enhanced by synthesizers. *Lost Lost* is a nice ending to an incredible band. —Ryan Leach (Goner, goner-records.com)

LOW CULTURE: Demo: Cassette

Man, I thought for sure this was going to be some crazy hardcore or powerviolence, what with the black and white drawing of a zombie-looking dude on the cover. Far from it; Low Culture serve up four songs of melodic punk which should appeal to fans of Future Virgins and Tenement. I'm really digging the four-track sound—which I think suits this band perfectly—as well as any other band that dares to consider themselves punk. A 7" is apparently already out, so this demo certainly got the job done in drawing attention. Let me tell you, your attention is well deserved here. —Juan Espinosa (Dead Broke, Dirt Cult)

MASKED INTRUDER / TURKLETONS, THE: Split: 7"

Masked Intruder: Four songs played in the key of tight, 4/4 pop punk. One of my favorite keys. One of these songs is also on their self-titled full length, available from Red Scare. The songs are about girls, and are very good. The

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Turkletons: These two songs are faster, but still in the pop punk key. A dude sings the first song, which is about the kissing disease (it's a real thing). A girl sings the second song, which is about having a kidney stone. I listened to that one a couple extra times. I'm a sucker for female vocalists. You can't lose on either side of this one. —Nighthawk (Hang Up / Rad Girlfriend / Lost Cat, hanguprecords.com)

MEATMIST: *Smut: LP*

Fourteen unrelenting tracks of assaultive noise rock with warm, fuzzy titles like "Filth Fuck," "Burn the House Down," and "World ov Shit." If this don't clean yer clock, you're probably already deaf. —Jimmy Alvarado (XO Press, xotapes@gmail.com)

MEDICAL TOURISTS: *Self-titled: LP*

As an early '80s zinester, i got plenty of weird promo records that were this sort of angular, herky-jerky, Devo/Flying Lizards-damaged, post-new wave/pre-industrial post-punk art-school twitching and spasming, often fronted by a female vocalist of dubious vocal appeal. Nine times out of ten, i wound up selling them for pennies on the dollar at the local used record emporium, since they weren't cool hardcore records, and were, to be honest, largely annoying. Once in a while there'd be something cool (no examples come immediately to mind, which might go a long way in conveying the depth of my disinterest in the genre), but, by and large, i thought these records were a senseless

waste of avant-vinyl. Fast-forward thirty years. Somehow, for reasons unclear, the Medical Tourists have not only mastered the fine art of sounding like angular, herky-jerky, Devo/Flying Lizards-damaged, post-new wave/pre-industrial post-punk art-school twitching and spasming—hell, they've got a song called "Permanent Press," know what i'm saying?—but they've also managed to create an album of this kooky shit that is absolutely rock solid from stem to stern. I mean, there is NOT a bad song on it, and the actual craft of the production is impeccable. This is wholly without precedent! There were barely any good 45s that sounded like this back in the day, let alone a whole freaking album! This album will do the same thing for whatever the hell genre it's in as the Epoxies first record did for its far more sultry and humanoid counterpart! Thank you, Medical Tourists, for opening the floodgates for years and years of annoying herky-jerky music to come!!! Hope you get that bargain liver you've been wanting. **BEST SONG:** "YSIG" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Elect Reject Object." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The record's intro is provided by Rerun honcho Jason Ross's dad, Ron. Ron used to be a DJ on WKAU-AM when i was a kid, therefore, it is possible ((though not verified)) that it was Ron Ross who played "Do You Wanna Dance?" by the Ramones on WKAU the day i heard punk rock for the first time. How's THAT for cred? —Rev. Nørð (Rerun / Import/Export)

MERX: *Self-titled: LP*

Is it possible to understand and not understand at the same time? Merx is like a canvas that starts off black instead of white. They play highly constructed, aurally articulated, meticulous post punk. It's dark, experimental, and filled with electronics. The vocalist is melodramatic, singing in a deep register, like Johnnie Jungleguts. My closest contemporary comparison would be as how Wounded Lion takes the Talking Heads and Star Wars references, Merx robes themselves in slow Joy Division and décollages; strips away, lacerates. This isn't incidental music. I'm just not sure if the hands-on-everything super-self- and music-aware style of this record isn't eclipsing my enjoyment of it. I'm probably just not the intended audience. Features members of The Pope, Bipolar Bear, and ex-Spits. —Todd Taylor (Permanent)

MIDNITE SNAXXX: *"You Kill Me": 7"EP*

Powerpop garagepunk from some Budget Rock luminaries, bands that shoulda been household names (Trashwomen, Bobbyteens, Loudmouths, shit-tons more i'm drawing a blank on.) Combine Nikki Corvette, Ramones, leather jackets, and hooks galore... a teenage dream of badassery! Not unlike drummer Tina Lucchesi's Top Ten outfit. Not your Goner Records typical packaging. Pretty sweet. —Sal Lucci (Goner)

MIDNITE SNAXXX: *"You Kill Me": 7"EP*

Junk food as soul food. Soul food as budget rock. A tiny squeak before some

words. Think spinning-rubber Nikki And The Corvettes, but a roughed-up, knife-carrying Nikki who powerslides an Olds 442 through red lights. I know this sounds like an ingredients list, but fuck it: three unimpeachable women playing no-bullshit, not-good-for-you rock'n'roooooo featuring Tina Lucchesi (Trashwomen, Tina And The Total Babes, Cyclops, Bobbyteens), Dulcinea Gonzalez (Loudmouths, MRR, VP of advertising at *San Francisco Bay Guardian*), and Renee Leal (LaTeenos). Rip it open. Chow down on salt and piss and vinegar. —Todd Taylor (Goner)

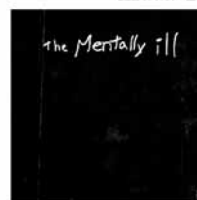
MOON BANDITS: *Straight Thinking Means Plain Speaking: CD*

Super posi-political, cutesy banjo and violin folk from Los Angeles that rubs me the wrong way in every way, mostly because it makes me feel like a negative jerk if i can't get behind their one-dimensional and downright cheesy lyrics and delivery. If you like Ghost Mice you'll definitely like this. —Craven Rock (Self-released, moonbandits@gmail.com)

MORNING GLORY: *Poets Were My Heroes: CD*

Morning Glory is the more melodic solo project of Ezra Kire, who is best known for Leftöver Crack and Choking Victim. The band has been around in various forms for many years (including the live version i saw in 2008, which i'm not sure ever actually recorded), but this album is an exciting departure, because it

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is the first one of their releases to finally congeal into a full cohesive sound. Many of their (incredibly hard to find) earlier albums are collections of scattered recordings made on the cheap, which range from decent (*The Whole World Is Watching* EP) to just above boom box levels of recording (*Tha Suicide Singles* and *This Is No Time Ta Sleep*). They all featured songs, though, that at their core, consisted of interesting and promising bits of sharp-barbed, melodic punk—some of which was eventually adopted by Leftöver Crack—that were just waiting for a proper fleshing out. This album finally lets the music sound full enough to breathe. This album could be subtitled *Recovery Anthems*. Lyrically, it is quite apparent that Ezra is a man who has many personal demons that he has struggled with through the years. Several of the songs here deal with addiction and rebuilding. What is refreshing about this subject matter is that the songs on here, such as “Touch” and my favorite “Shelter from the Spoon,” examine drug dependency in the sense of a struggle, not a glorification of self-destruction. Many other songs, like “Poets Were My Heroes,” “Orphan’s Holiday,” and the epic-ly scoped penultimate song “Born to December” are intense lyrical self examinations of the effects and realities of the present, as shaped by past life choices and situations. This can get rather weighty, but rather than caving into nihilism, there is a distinct undercurrent of optimism; given the chance and inner determination for one to rise above—whether it’s addiction

and personal circumstance, politics in the larger scope of global politics, or failures in society. One should not neglect to mention the richness of the album’s production. There are many subtle touches that bring out extra layers to the street punk heart (in the best sense) of many of the songs, such as the string section and piano which carry the melody of “Born to December,” or the way that “Touch” is essentially an organ-led dirge featuring what sounds like a choral ensemble. Even the one song I’m not big on here, “March of the Asylum,” features an interesting use of a horn section. This album is an interesting document that is well worth spending a little extra time with, as it offers up an examination of struggle and survival that chooses to venture down a more complex path. —Adrian (Fat)

MOSS ICON: *Discography: 2 x CD*

Often cited as an influence on both the post-hardcore and emo genres, Moss Icon had a brief life in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s. Main guitarist Tonie Joy went on to co-found Universal Order Of Armageddon and play briefly in Born Against. The band has popped up here and there sporadically over the years since, but remained obscure to all but the most dedicated fans of their music, thanks to their original recordings being all long out of print. Now thanks to Temporary Residence Ltd., Moss Icon’s complete discography is available once again in a two CD set jam packed with lyrics, live photos, and original album art.

Beyond the beautiful packaging is the music itself, which thrashes back and forth between raging walls of sound and quiet, meandering parts. Vocalist Jonathan Vance’s alternating spoken word style of singing and enraged shouting carries his poetic, almost stream of consciousness lyrics throughout. There’s a very emotionally charged feeling on many of these recordings—a sort of melancholy mixed with barely repressed rage—a feeling heightened by the rise and fall from loud to quiet parts. The intensity this creates makes for some damn catchy music. I’ve had this in heavy rotation and don’t see myself tiring of it anytime soon. It’s a highly enjoyable and highly recommended reissue. —Paul J. Comeau (Temporary Residence, annapaz@temporaryresidence.com)

NARCS, THE: *Long Hot Summer: EP*

Excellent follow up to their previous EP on Reel Time, *I Want Dope I Want Pussy I Want All That Shit*. In fact, this record surpasses that record, and it was no sloucher. They ratcheted up the energy here to something a bit more on edge and almost reckless. Punk that lives up to its name: dirty, raw, rough, and all with a sense of something fucked could very well happen. I mean, fuck, this band is made up of some historical figures: Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglas, and flugelhorn master Chuck Mangione. So you know something epic is just around the corner. An American band, if there ever was! The title track is a rager with a short little

guitar noodle to add a little unease to the deal. It’s the song “Ratbone” though that really connects. Short and urgent! Also, “R.O.T. Blood,” which has a sense of coming together at the recording studio with the weird ending, like, is that it? I guess so! I imagine their live shows in a room of cigarette smoke, leather jackets permeating years of poor hygiene, cheap beer, and a few participants who can’t keep their shit together. The Narcs... there is no other. —M.Avrq (Cowabunga, cowabungarecords.com)

NASTY, THE: *Murder Mask: CD*

Super fast and screamy thrash punk. Awesome! This CD has five songs in five minutes, and no lyrics sheet. When you put out a full length, send it this way! —Lauren Trout (P.I.G.)

NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS:

Ocean Beach Party: 7"

This time, Neighborhood Brats are taking it to the beach with this two-song blast that is liable to give you a coronary. It’s not a trip to the beach that’s all happy and fun. No, this is filled with rain and clouds and blood and zombie sharks. A real beach party! This band can do no wrong. As with their previous releases, the songs, the energy, the tempo—everything is perfect. More, more, more! —Ty Stranglehold (Falsified)

NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS:

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Razorcake #66’s cover band continues to prove why Neighborhood Brats are

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NERVEBREAKERS:

Hijack the Radio!: CD

A collection of rare recordings by a Texas band famous for two things: 1.) They opened a gig for the Sex Pistols during the latter's infamous and ill-fated U.S. tour; 2) The song "My Girlfriend Is a Rock," which was a minor hit and has been subsequently covered by no less than the Angry Samoans. Collected here are a number of choice tracks spanning 1975-'79, culled from assorted releases, demos, and recording sessions. Sound quality is top notch and the songs are fuggin' aces, bucko. Highly recommended for both the completist and the casual punker fan. -Jimmy Alvarado (Get Hip)

NO TOMORROW BOYS:

Animal Eyes: 7"

New band from Matt Mayhem from the sorely missed and amazing punk band Young People With Faces. This band is quite different sounding, coming on like a '90s release on Crypt Records. Falling somewhere between

say, the Revelators, and the Devil Dogs, No Tomorrow Boys dole out lo-fi garage trash in spades. -Mike Frame (Rapid Pulse)

NOFX: *Self/Entitled*: CD

I came to NOFX's new full length with minimal expectations but came away pleasantly surprised. This is probably one of the most, if not *the* most, consistent NOFX releases I have heard. I like NOFX. I think "Linoleum" is one of the best punk songs ever, and have caught them live more than a few times, but when it comes to their albums, even my favorites such as *Punk in Drublic* and *The War on Errorism* have songs on them that I have to skip or do my best to ignore (I'm thinking of you "My Heart Is Yearning" and "Anarchy Camp"). Not so with *Self/Entitled*. The closest to a weak spot is "Xmas Has Been X'ed" but being the last track, it isn't really much of an issue, and, all said, it is an okay song. "72 Hookers," which starts the album, features Fat Mike's perhaps debatable take on Middle East foreign policy in regards to jihadists, but also has a classic-sounding skate punk opening riff, up there with "The Separation of Church and Skate." A particular highlight is "She Didn't Lose Her Baby," which plays like the even darker companion piece to *White Trash* 's... "She's Gone" taken from the side of an addict mother. Fat Mike really shines on songs like these because he can frame effectively empathetic character studies of people

who are not necessarily characters deserving of sympathy, but of some understanding. The same goes for the short "I, Fatty" which appears to be based on Jerry Stahl's engrossing fictionalized autobiography of Fatty Arbuckle of the same name. One of my problems with *Wolves in Wolves' Clothing* and *Cokie the Clown* were the way the albums' more personal tracks reveled so heavily in Fat Mike's self destructive behavior to the point of seeming contemptuous of both those close to him and his fans. Thankfully, there are now songs that seem to reflect a sort of maturation in acknowledging consequences to these actions. "Cell Out" is a narrative song detailing an ill-fated trip to a bar and having an uncomfortable "you can never go back" moment with a hardline former fan who accuses the narrator of selling out. What is perhaps the centerpiece of the album is "I've Got One Jealous Again, Again" (the sequel to the much more optimistic "We've Got Two Jealous Agains") which deconstructs Fat Mike's divorce through the lens of a lifelong dedicated punk fan and record collector. It peels back the sarcasm and eternal adolescence that many assign as NOFX's modus operandi, to examine a failed adult relationship in a very concise and affecting manner. It may not be emo, but the bit of honesty really does a lot to help NOFX craft an album capable of standing next to many of their stronger works, which is impressive after a career this long. -Adrian (Fat)


NOITUUS: *Self-titled*: 7"EP

Lärm moves to Finland and ditches the youth crew for crust and d-beat. This is so fucking out of control that it evokes images of the guitarist's cabs shooting sparks and melting their input cords. Pissed-as-fuck and about as easy to listen to as the sound of an exploding toilet on a loop, fans of Nerveskade take notice; this is the stuff tuneless distort-core dreams are made of. -Juan Espinosa (Illegal / Punk In Lapland / Distroy Everything, noituus.moga@gmail.com)

NONA / PEOPLE WATCHIN': *Split*: 7"


(Disclaimer: On the front of this record, written in Sharpie, reads "ex-Credentials and member of Spraynard," which is now ex-Spraynard, I guess. I have no idea which band they're talking about. Maybe both? My money's on People Watchin'.) Nona: Shang-A-Lang meets Good Luck if it was sung by Kim Shattuck from The Muffs. It's fan-fucking-tastic. Catchy in the Ergs kind of way, where the parts of the song aren't repeated ad infinitum and the variety in any given song is impressive. For a band that only has this plus a demo EP floating around, this is remarkable. I'll be keeping a close eye on them over the coming years. People Watchin': Ah, Rivethead, I hear you so often it seems almost impossible that you only put out two EPs. You can probably guess that this is growly, fast pop punk. The songs grab a tempo and stick to it with solid guitar work carrying the band's sound. What a beautiful

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NOUN: Self-titled: 7"

Apparently, I'm a little out of the loop on this band. This is Screaming Females frontperson Marissa Paternoster's solo project and they have two full lengths that I have never heard. If I were to take a stab at giving this a genre tag, I'd go with stoner space pop, but even that doesn't quite cover it. It's reverby, guitar-driven rock of some variety, but the definitions become vague and blurred as this record keeps spinning. It is definitely a noun of some sort. Huh. Clever name. Usually, the problem with these records is how lost the songs seems to get, but Noun is smarter than that. The trail is rocky and rough, but any distractions to the journey are brief and concise. I recommend this record. Save this one for a night with the stars. —Bryan Static (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

NUBS, THE: "I Don't Need You" b/w "Dogs": 7"

As far as I can tell, Last Laugh is sort of the silver to Sing Sing's gold standard with regards to obscure '70s punk reissue labels; this might be damning them with faint praise considering that I can't really think of a legit contender for the bronze, but I'm sure they'll get over it. Originally released in 1979, "I Don't Need You" is a decent KBD-style punker

with Norelco® shaver guitars and rubber band bass—not quite the next "Just Head" or "Bummer Bitch," but decent enough to merit preservation. I'm actually more taken with "Dogs," the quirkier flipside about a human who thinks he's a pooch, which sounds like Syd Barrett fronting the Snivelling Shits or something. Why Syd Barrett be fronting is anybody's guess. **BEST SONG:** "Dogs" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "I Don't Need You" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Recorded at the same New Hampshire studio which would later beget those early GG Allin recordings! **TASTE THE IMPENDING GLORY OF "1980's ROCK & ROLL!!!"** —Rev. Norb (Last Laugh)

OBNOX: I'm Bleeding Now: LP

I didn't even need to check on the location of this one-man freakshow. Middle America? Bingo. This dude has done time in This Moment In Black History and the Puffy Areolas, but this is a different beast altogether. Straddling the line between straight-up noise and the rock'n'roll, like Iggy played back in the day. Swirling noise, yelping vocals, and everything up to eleven. Bastard child of the Clone Defects gone noise.... The soundtrack to Cleveland 2012. This shit is too much for me; I must be getting soft. —Tim Brooks (12Xu)

OCCULT DETECTIVE CLUB:

Alright Gentlemen: 7"

A while back, I got an amazing 7" by Hex Dispensers with a ripping B-

side called "I'm a Ghost." I played that song over and over again before realizing that on the record, it said the song was written by a band called Occult Detective Club. It took a while, but I tracked them down. Another amazing band from Denton, Texas? Not surprising. Well after two LPs, the ODC are back with a brand new 7" and I couldn't be happier. Four blasts of muscular pop that forces you to bounce in your shoes uncontrollably. The hooks will stay with you forever and will have you singing at the top of your lungs in the car uncaringly. Four songs that instantly bring me back to seeing them live at Awesome Fest and have me longing for more. This band is that good. This record is that good. Pick this up. Pick it all up. —Ty Stranglehold (Dirt Cult)

OVERNIGHT LOWS, THE: "Cones and Rods" b/w "Shouldn't Say It": 7"

The Overnight Lows continue to blaze with this two song offering. The trio play Dangerhouse-paced punk with a rock and roll twist. Snotty male and female tradeoff vocals over raw riffage. Plus you have to think about what they are saying once in a while. Quality punk all around. Most essential. —Billups Allen (Blah!!)

PANIC BEATS, THE: ...Strike Again: LP

I'm not sure when the pop punk community collectively thought that writing nothing but creepy stalker songs over Ramones song structures was the way to push the genre forward

(The Creeps, Masked Intruder), but this is starting to go from a few gimmick bands to a legitimate subgenre and that's weird. What really put me off about this record are the vocals. They come off sounding like the Dopamines if their singers had an incredibly weak grasp of melody. I wanted to like this, but there wasn't enough to really grab onto. —Bryan Static (Night Fighter, nightfighterrecords.com)

PEEPLER WATCHING: Demo: 7"

This demo (in tape form) has been around for a while, but I'm really glad Nervous Nelly had the good sense to put this out on a 7". Not a lot of demos deserve a "proper" release, but this is one of the exceptions. Peeples Watching is the new band from Zack of The Credentials and picks up right where his old band left off: scrappy and passionate DIY punk rock for fans of '90s Bay Area punk and Boston stuff like Witches With Dicks and Awful Man. I've said this in past reviews of his other band, but it seems with every release he's a part of the songs get better and more memorable, and this release is no exception. Looking forward hearing more from these guys, for sure! —Chris Mason (Nervous Nelly, nervouslytumblr.com)

PLANKS: Funeral Mouth: LP

Historically, the Germans have done chaotic, melodic hardcore on a level that other folks can only aspire to. A perusal of the Per Koro discography will quickly confirm this fact. And on

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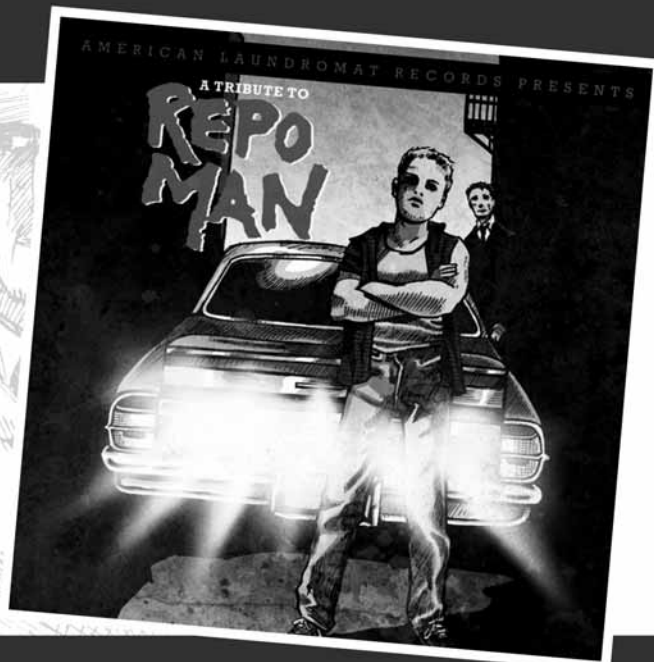
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American Laundromat Records had a blast working on a tribute to the 1984 cult classic film "Repo Man." The original soundtrack celebrated the southern California punk movement of the late 70's/early 80's with bands **Black Flag**, **Circle Jerks**, **Suicidal Tendencies**, **The Plugz**, and **Iggy Pop**. American Laundromat has recruited an outstanding group of artists to "rewire" these classic punk tracks, including **Those Darlins**, **Matthew Sweet**, **Amanda Palmer**, **Mike Watt**, **Black Francis**, **Weekend**, **Polar Bear Club**, and **The Suicide Dolls**.



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their third LP, Mannheim's Planks not only carry on the tradition of brilliant German hardcore, but continue to build on their incredibly solid foundation by incorporating more elements of modern black metal, atmospheric sludge, and somber instrumental passages that fuse perfectly to create what will no doubt be hailed a high point of the genre. Phenomenal. —Dave Williams (Golden Antenna, goldenantenna.com)

PLASTIC CROSS:

Grayscale Rainbows: LP

Huh. One half of The Measure (SA) and a few other guys trying their hands at hardcore punk. If you can get past the album artwork, there's some pretty good material here. (Craig Fu Yong, you are a pretty good vocalist and your lyrics aren't half bad either—they're actually really good—but this cover and such? Eeeek.) A little burly, a little frantic, a lot of songs—and a lot of thinking around corners and dodging the obvious. The dichotomy here: *Grayscale Rainbows* is full of traditional hardcore, but with an aversion to traditional verse-chorus solutions; it's hardcore full of little flourishes, little blips and bleeps that add depth and strength. Eighteen songs. I'm not much of a fan of hardcore these days, but Plastic Cross more than held my interest. Quality. —Keith Rosson (Don Giovanni)

POISON IDEA:

The Fatal Erection Years 1983-1986: LP

Early Poison Idea is pretty damn near unimpeachable in my book, so if you're

new to Portland negativity or don't have five hundred or more bucks laying around to get the *Pick Your King 7"* or *Record Collectors Are Pretentious Assholes* EPs, TKO's done a nice service for you. Sounds great, looks great. Live and comp. tracks are pulled in to fill out both sides of a long-player. There's honor in keeping the legacy alive. What's new and interesting are Jerry A.'s liner notes. They clear some things up. He admits to PI being a product of their environment, that they were drawn into the most negative aspects of L.A. punk—both the music and the people—and that they tried to outdo their contemporaries. Basically, outpunk the punks. It's an honest reaction. It explains both what makes Poison Idea's music so believable: their rage, their damage, their directness. They were fucked up kids who became fucked up adults playing ugly (a compliment) music. It also admits one of the great shames of the first wave of hardcore, where Jerry reconciles that "being creative, smart, and having any kind of sympathy toward your fellow man was not allowed." —Todd Taylor (TKO)

POST TEENS: *The Heat: 7" EP*

Goddamn, this is great! Six tunes of superbly performed mid-paced punk that packs quite a punch from beginning to end. It reminds me so much of the noisier Marked Men jams, but with just enough of their own touch to make their songs shine on their own. These boys be straight outta Gainesville, which means yes

on the beards but no on the country/southern influence. Do yourself a favor. —Juan Espinosa (No Idea)

POTTY MOUTH: *Sun Damage: 7"*

When I was a teenager, though I never fully immersed myself in the K Records and Kill Rock Stars catalogs outside of the obvious stuff like Beat Happening, Bikini Kill, and Bratmobile, I had a few compilation CDs that I loved. This stuff kind reminds me of a lot of those songs: jangly and kind of spacey pop songs with a hard edge. Really cool stuff! Also, did they take their name from the first Bratmobile record? I sure hope they did! —Chris Mason (Puzzle Pieces / Ride The Snake / Feeble Minds)

PRETTY BOY THORSON AND LIL' HAPPINESS: *"You're Gonna Miss Me" b/w "Way Out": 7"*

There is no insert with this, and there is no label on the vinyl (which is transparent gold). The song titles are etched into each side. That's the only way to know which song you're playing. That, or the fact that Jesse sings the one on Side A, and Annie (from The Soviettes) sings the one on Side B. Lots of detective work is necessary here. The cover photo would have you assume that there are five people in this outfit; Jesse, who is an asshole (or at least that's what a shirt that I have says), Annie, who is cool, Paddy Costello, who is cool, and two other dudes who look familiar. Both songs are about people leaving each other. The band features a full, laid-

back sound on these catchy tunes. The music definitely makes up for the lack of information here. —Nighthawk (Rad Girlfriend, radgirlfriendrecords.com)

PRETTY BULLSHIT / WARM NEEDLES: *The Same Shit Everyday: 7"*

I'm not altogether sure this thing is actually titled *The Same Shit Everyday*. It's what the TV on the cover of the record says. It might just be a self-titled split release, and the TV's just making a depressing point to go with the drawing of the dude hangin' himself. I dunno. Pretty Bullshit: They either misspell "pores" in the lyric sheet or they're bartenders and are being really clever. Sound-wise they sound like a second or third tier punk band from 1980. Could use more melody / rage / something, but you'll forgive it because they're from way back when and were influential and original. Except they aren't. Probably good live but I don't see their side getting repeat spins. Warm Needles: Stupid band name. Depressing lyrics that are at least somewhat about drugs. Kinda reminiscent of Tim Version or similarly gruff but melodic bands. Shit, this is pretty solidly catchy. Definitely wouldn't mind hearing more from Warm Needles. —Ryan Horky (Dig My Grave, digmygraverecords.bandcamp.com)

PREVENGE / SHARED ARMS: *Split: 7"*

Prevenge: Shouty not-quite-hardcore punk rock. I feel like I've heard these songs before with different names. Kind of reminds me of the punk bands Fat Wreck was signing in the mid-



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2000s, like The Sainte Catherine and the heavier bits of Smoke Or Fire. Could use some more variety, but good songwriting nonetheless. Shared Arms: Emo-tinged skate punk. The singer almost sounds like Jason Shevchuk which is cool, but I wish the song was as short as a Kid Dynamite one. Even if its length is longer than my personal preference, it does justify itself with motions of the music—changing paces and feel just enough times to move in all the right ways. Good stuff. —Bryan Static (Pavones, pavonesrecords.tumblr.com / Tragicomedy, tragicomedyrecords.com / Guerilla, guerilla-asso.com / Struggletown / Juice Box)

P.R.O.B.L.E.M.S. / MODERN PETS:

Split: 7"

Modern Pets have a couple records out and are quite good at the beach punk/Hostage Records kind of thing. Think Stitches running headlong into the Briefs or many of the releases on the Modern Action label. P.R.O.B.L.E.M.S. are a Portland band, featuring Kelly from Pierced Arrows/Resist on bass and Bradley from the Weaklings on vocals. Good, solid punk rock and a solid version of "Remedy" by Rose Tattoo. —Mike Frame (Doomtown)

PUFFY AREOLAS:

1982—DisHonorable Discharge: CD

A potent, toxic blend of space rock, punk, and noise rock, not unlike Chrome, Disorder, and some AmRep band gettin' all snuggly. The results

vacillate between to the point blasts and longer pieces that sometimes border on the hypnotic, which, depending on general disposition, the average listener is either gonna love or loathe. Nice bit of racketmongering, I gotta say. —Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac)

RAT COLUMNS: Sceptre Hole: LP

This full length reminds me of maudlin new wave from the '90s. The vocals are reminiscent of gloomy jangle pop from that era. The album cover is a nice sepia photograph of a man swimming. It's in the style of a Smiths or Coil album cover. I feel like that must be what they are going for, at least to a degree. It moves at the pace of My Bloody Valentine or Jesus And Mary Chain. They branch out into a few interesting beats that venture into Cure territory. I'd say it is well done. The songs are structured well and the recording is solid. I think it would stick out to me if I were more into this sort of thing. If you are way into shoegazing, it's a thumbs up. —Billups Allen (Smartguy)

RED DONS: Ausländer: 7"

I'm of the opinion that Red Dons are the best band walking the planet today. I fuggin' love this band! They have this way of making music that causes everything else around you to melt away and all that is left is the music. You are completely in that moment. It's a great feeling. The songs soar, race, and have undeniable soul. Catchy without being corny. Insightful without being overwrought. Just fucking great

music. The title track is godhead! I've listened to it over and over so many times, and have yet to tire of it. Is that even possible? It's such a great song. A nice, quick tempo and the vocals float over, pulling you into the song, and the chorus burns into your mind. I like how the guitar comes in at the end and builds and closes out with a noisy swirl. The kind of song that makes you want to start a band and take over the world. On the B side is "Mauvaise Foi," which slows down a little bit with a jerky and bouncy rhythm here and there. When the melody comes in, nothing else matters. I really like the line, "Anointed one, where did I go wrong," as it leads into the verse. This single is a classic. —M.Avrq (Dirtnap, dirtnaprecs.com)

RELENTLESS APPROACH: Juicy: 7"

So... upon picking this 7" up, the first thing I noticed about it was the photo of Notorious B.I.G. on the cover. Being slightly familiar with Biggie Smalls, I then noticed that the title of this record shares the same title as a Notorious B.I.G. song, "Juicy." Oh wait! It turns out all three of the songs on this record share their names with Notorious B.I.G. songs. Wondering if this is a cover band, I drop the needle on the record. These are definitely not covers, but instead appear to me more of the "tribute" variety to the deceased rapper... all done in a brutal, Midwestern hardcore style. On paper, this sound like it's all a thinly veiled joke, but the dark and doomy inspired

tunes prove to be no laughing matter. —Mark Twistworthy (Give Praise, givepraiserecords.com)

RICHARD JAMES & SPECIAL RIDERS: Never Get Out: 7"

Moody garage punk with kind of a Gun Club meets Oblivians vibe is what this band offers up. Limited Edition of 205, copies so if this sounds like your cuppa, you will wanna move fast. —Mike Frame (Wrecked 'Em)

RICKY C. QUARTET, THE:

"Small Species" b/w "Tonight": 7"

The a-side's a nicely thudding piece of work in its own right, but it's the flip that really smokes. I mean, *sheesh*. If you had told me this record was put out in 1977 by some dorks in London, I'd have believed you. Think the best of the Adverts, Newtown Neurotics, etc. This 7's only fault is that there's only two songs. This thing—all four minutes of it or whatever—absolutely smokes. Awesome, awesome record. More, please. —Keith Rosson (Rapid Pulse)

RIDGELANDS, THE:

Corey Webster Must Die: CD

Right off the bat, these guys get points for name checking the ultimate in cheesy '80s skate movies *Thrashin'*. Hell, the shot on the cover of Hook on the verge of smashing Corey's arm is worth the price of admission. As for the tunes, we've got some good mid-tempo pop punk on the go. To be honest it, wasn't what I was expecting, but it's really catchy. I'd like to hear some

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more. Now, "Beat it ya Val jerks!" —Ty Stranglehold (Sexy Baby)

RIDGEMONT / TWO HAND FOOLS: Split: 7"

I really didn't want to like Ridgemont's beard punk with its "Stay Gold, Pony Boy" type lyrics, but I have to say that it grew on me after several listens. Damn you, youth! They are, however, still pretty by-the-book and unremarkable at this point. If they spend some time developing their own sound, they have a chance at being a pretty good band because they certainly have the verve for it. Two Hand Fools are fucking awesome. They play a jangling and jagged post-hardcore full of progressive build-ups which lead to crashing breakdowns and gang vocals. The song "Hot Tongues" is a fucking uncomfortable and misanthropic love song that brings to mind the edgy, false sweetness of the best of Sugar songs without sounding anything like Sugar. When the band shouts out together, "I'm stepping on your tongue / and I hope you fucking feel it / you're talking in the dark / your tongue so hot I can see it," it's so thick with angst and displaced rage that it'll give you chills. By the time they get to the part where they sing, "So I'll need to have you calm down / I've seen both sides of this," you know that all is lost. It's a fucking killer track. —Craven Rock (Mindless, mndlsrdrds@gmail.com)

RIVER CITY TANLINES: Coast to Coast: LP

The Tanlines are back! Been a long time, but fans of *I'm Your Negative* will

want to pick up *Coast to Coast*. Alicja's songwriting covers the gamut—from power pop to (almost) prog rock. John Bonds (drums) and Terrence Bishop (bass) form one hell of a rhythm section. Bishop, in particular, stands out. It's crucial to have a great bassist in a three piece. The production on this record is unbelievably high—and it actually sounds good. *Coast to Coast* is a nice return LP for the Tanlines. —Ryan Leach (Big Legal Mess)

ROT IN HELL / VEGAS: Split: 6"

A cool, screened, split 6" featuring one song each from top-of-the-Holy-Terror-heap creeps Rot In Hell and Vegas. I believe this was initially a part of Organized Crime's mysterious Halloween package and is now available on its own. The Rot In Hell side is pure RIH, and anyone familiar with their LP on Deathwish or their slew of 7"s will recognize their perfect amalgam of Integrity, Ringworm, and early Pale Creation. The elusive Vegas offers a creepy acoustic track ala Roses Never Fade that only serves to reiterate their statement of weirdness. Very cool record. —Dave Williams (Organized Crime, organizedcrimerecords.com)

RSO: Axl: 7"

The third release off Ryan Owens' revolving door of an ensemble is a no wave, bluesy punk version of sittin' on the porch with a triple x jug of hooch. Like Tom Waits's later material of howling, vocal-centric tracks lightly seasoned with a rattling guitar thrash,

these four new songs take a second or two to mature. Regrettably, Owens' screechy Bobcat Goldthwait vocals seem contrived and at best; this is his version of PJ Harvey's lo-fi, raw, minimalist *Rid of Me*, that fell short of the mark. —Kristen K. (Self-released, r-s-o.bandcamp.com)

SAILBOATS ARE WHITE: Turbo II: 7"

Not listening to music as much as I used to, prior to the birth of my son, has been detrimental to me at times. I get hung up easily and stumped to come up with words when something comes my way that is not familiar to me. Take this, for instance. I definitely hear punk rock. But I hear drums that sound like a drum machine. Synthesizers or something listed as a Stylophone take a part along with the usual suspect of instruments. The vocals are delivered with a moaning and painful approach, yet it seems to be with intentional with careless abandon. Put it all together and it's a unique package that shows originality and appeals to me. I can feel the conviction. The energy is absorbed in my ears. Some may say this is indie and others may say punk. Either way, nothing is wrong when you don't always paint by numbers. —Donofthedeath (Schizophrenic)


SCHOOL JERKS: Self-titled: LP

Ever since their first EP, I've been wondering if and when these here School Jerks would put together a long player. Well, it took a couple more EPs I believe, and we finally have twelve



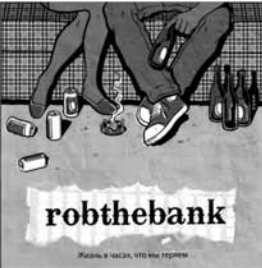
hefty inches in our hands. Indeed, baby! This record is exactly along the same lines as their previous efforts. Pretty much what I was hoping for, since I always wanted to hear more from their short, short seven inches. Even live, when they played here with Cülo a couple years back, the set was a chaotic blast, and... well, short. This record is a smidge longer and definitely worth the wait. Somewhere between early Black Flag and Sick Pleasure. The vocals have a nasally sound with a disturbed growl. The guitars sound scratchy and gritty, and you can hear the drums stumbling and racing through the mess. Though they come from the frigid wastelands of Canada, you would think they live in Los Angeles, circa 1981. Kind of fast, but not really, though the urgency and tension create this auditory illusion of speed. It's mostly mid-tempo and the songs sound gloriously filthy! Yep, they're that fucking great. I wish they would come back to Los Angeles. —M.Avr (Grave Mistake)

SCREAMING FEMALES: Ugly: CD

Ugly is the fifth studio album from Screaming Females. On this go-round, the band continues exploring the boundaries of their singular brand of catchy garage punk. Song structures built around strong hooks typify Screaming Females' songs, and the same goes for this album. Guitarist/vocalist Marissa Paternoster shreds through each track, but especially so in tracks like "High," which was one of my favorites on this. If you're already



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a fan, this has a bunch of new jams you're sure to dig, and if you've never checked out Screaming Females before, this is a great place to get started. —Paul J. Comeau (Don Giovanni)

SENSIBLES, THE: *Dino: 7" EP*

Not to be confused with the Notsensibles—which would indicate you are a very, very poor listener—this is an Italian quartet who slap out deep-dish slabs of mid-tempo punky-pop, heavy on the guitars, whilst a toy-voiced starlet chirps over the top in adorably accented English. “Open Book” is definitely the hit here, but that’s not for lack of trying on the other three songs. Meaty AND cute, like a good calzone! BEST SONG: “Open Book” BEST SONG TITLE: “Dino” i guess. They didn’t really seem to have much money in the budget for song titles. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: After perusing the lyric sheet, I have decided that “clutched” should, in fact, be a real word. —Rev. Norb (Sensibles, thesensibles@gmail.com)

SEVEN SISTERS OF SLEEP: *Self-titled: 7"*

Man alive, do I love this band. SSoS’ debut 12” was in heavy rotation for months on end upon its release, and I can pretty much guarantee that the same will be true for this 7”. Seething, ominous, bludgeoning, heavy hardcore that is equal parts classic doom, late ‘90s/early ‘00s Clevo/Cali metalcore, and blackened thrash. This band is as much about

atmosphere/aesthetic as it is about sound, and both elements are fucking painful and stunning. Do not sleep on this shit. —Dave Williams (A389)

SHORES: *Leavening: CD*

I like the slow, heavy, openness of this album. This band shows its post-rock DNA in the way that the instrumentation is more interested in building atmosphere rather than crushing with attack. Vocally, the singer’s eased dead pan reminds me of the more restrained moments of my beloved I Hate Myself. In short, this album feels like a perfect audio summation of the over-exposed black and white photography of the pictures on the album artwork—picturesque and given to contemplation. —Adrian (No Idea)

SHORT ATTENTION:

Polished Turds: 25 Decent Songs and One by Chris Grivet: 7" EP

Pop punk’s response to grindcore. In the early-to mid-‘90s, there was a race between Anal Cunt, Spontaneous Disgust, and Agathocles to turn grindcore into mincecore. On a 45 7”, the record for “songs” was way over one hundred. If you count the sound of a blip a “song.” It’s “interesting” in a Phillip Glass sort of way, but pretty aggravating listening. On the other side of the pendulum—but folded into the same envelope—are “The Chipmunks of Pop Punk,” Short Attention. This record is reminiscent of the Fat comp, *Short Music for Short People*, where

the song limit was thirty seconds, only reduced into further absurdity. Twenty-six “songs.” I’m a man of a long attention and this aggravated me by its very design. If you constantly scan and never land, this is tailor made for you... assuming you like minced chunks of pop punk. —Todd Taylor (No Breaks)

SIREN SONGS: *Demo 2011 II: Cassette*

“I didn’t experience fireworks, as they call them, until I was thirty three,” a deep and scratchy-voiced woman says on this tape long after the songs are over. It’s not a sample, it’s because this demo was recorded over a thrifted or dumpstered tape promoting some kind of love enhancing pill or potion. This is also probably the reason for the drag in parts of the songs, too. The fireworks, however, weren’t on this tape until Siren Songs started recording their punk songs over the original program. Siren Songs play female-fronted pop punk that is scrappy and raw enough to be irresistible. Legs’s voice is full of integrity and the sloppy warmth of young punk, but what stands out is how wonderfully imperfect her voice is. I’ve really been enjoying the wave of female-fronted bands with flawless and immaculate vocals like P.S. Eliot, The Measure [SA], and Reading Group, but it’s refreshing to hear a return to some good ol’ punk rock grit, which Legs has by the score, for instance, on “Nuclear Son,” by far the best song on the album with its fast drumming and bouncing bass line. It’s a song written by a male member of the band whose

ragged voice comes in on chorus and it’s a fast and desperate barnburner of a love song. “Nuclear Son” isn’t quite topped on the rest of the album, but the tone is definitely set for a bunch or really great pop punk songs from a band that you’ll be hearing about soon enough. So you can either download from their Bandcamp site or get a copy recorded over something that sucks for five dollars or trade. I would recommend the latter. It’s got some awesome art and I’m starting to like that part where it drags during the second song. Maybe you’ll get a similar idiosyncrasy. —Craven Rock (Self-released, sirensongs.bandcamp.com)

SLUT RIVER: *Off White: EP*

Off-kilter, lurching, abrasive sludge punk with snotty femme vocals: this is the sound of Iowa after too many PBRs, no niceties, just a smack round the chops and a kick to the head. Bringing to mind the abrasiveness of the Bags coupled with the drunken ramblings of the grunge years... Dickless, L7, Amphetamine Reptile... ugly and deranged. Totally into this, just wish the cover and lyric sheet weren’t a pile of horrible pixelated crap. —Tim Brooks (Salt Water)

SOMETHING FIERCE /

OCCULT DETECTIVE CLUB: Split: 10"

My love of bands from Texas continues with this brain-squeezing, amazing double Lone Star State blast of power pop punk whatever. Houston’s Something Fierce are new to me (other

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than that great set at Awesome Fest) and they kick this record off with a bang. Hard driving, yet kind of dreamy feeling pop, it just feels right. Denton's Occult Detective Club commands the flip side with laser precision. They've been a favorite of mine for a while, and the new songs are more of the same greatness. It's obvious to me that Dirtnap shares my affinity to Texas bands. Marked Men, Mind Spiders, Bad Sports, High Tension Wires, now Something Fierce and Occult Detective Club. Bring on more! —Ty Stranglehold (Dirtnap)

SOMETHING FIERCE / OCCULT DETECTIVE CLUB: Split: 10"

Something Fierce: Three *London Calling*-long songs from this Texas power trio. Anti-war pop? Like "Lost in the Supermarket," Something Fierce'll have you humming, "marketing... marketing slavery" like it's an advert for soap, gum, or shoes. (Come to think of it, any overthrow should have a memorable tagline that you can't get out of your head. Brilliant (both meanings: smart and bright), convicted. For those cynics who solely look to doom-black-and-barbed-wire imagery when recognizing political punk, Something Fierce will have you dancing on those flag-covered coffins in no time. Occult Detective Club: Clipped, spit-out delivery—to shamelessly borrow from the band—ODC are fucking craftsmen. There's an artistic lyricality, a hammer-and-nails workmanship, but it's neither too in-the-head or too stuck-in-the-

machine-of-endless-toil. Their songs remind me of people who can make something of utility that lasts a long time and is beautiful—be it a handicap ramp to the front door or a chair that'll last generations. Their songs have that quality of durability, like soles on well-made, long-wearing boots. Highly recommended. —Todd Taylor (Dirtnap)

SPEED KILLS: Self-titled: 7"

Blistering hardcore from Brazil that has more in common with noisy Japanese hardcore than the more straightforward stuff I've heard from South America. To be fair, I haven't heard a lot of hardcore from this part of the world in the past few years, so maybe their sound is indicative of the current style down there. If so, I'm sure things are going great because this band shreds. All the lyrics are in Spanish but English translations are included with some talking points about their content. They cover the anti-cop/anti-capitalist territory and there's a great song about how much they hate cops on bikes ("...wouldn't it be better if the cops would ride bikes instead of cars. I said it would be better if they didn't exist at all.") The recording is great and the packaging is well designed and easy to follow (which is not always the case with releases that include translations). —Ian Wise (Nada Nada Discos, info@nadanadadiscos.com)

SPENT FLESH: Self-titled: 10"

Blur/blender hardcore with a heritage that owes tips of the hat to Spazz

and is in a contemporary league with Brain F# and Rose Cross. This may be exhibiting how dumb I am, but when I first heard "electro-hardcore" over fifteen years ago, I was thinking of Spent Flesh, not Atari Teenage Riot. Spent Flesh is way more punk than hyperventilating techno. It doesn't hurt that the band's punk-informed up the wazoo: snippet odes to several Bad Brains riffs, wig-flipping nods to Hüsker Dü in the lyrics, locked grooves at the end of each side. Is it possible to simultaneously move the clock backwards and forwards? Does that fuck up the time-space continuum, like in those *Back to the Future* movies? One can only hope. Spent Flesh is the hovering skateboards of hardcore and simultaneously the white-light pain one feels after falling ten feet directly onto concrete. —Todd Taylor (P.Trash / FDH / Sit And Spin)

STATE LOTTERY: Fistfuls of Sand: 7"

Members of Get Bent and Laura Stevenson And The Cans splitting the difference between new style: nontwang "Americana" and a band like The Anniversary or Koufax. —Mike Frame (Salinas)

STEVE ADAMYK BAND: Self-titled: LP

Who the fuck? Oh wait... the Sedatives? Dug that band—this is sorta that band, I mean it isn't obvious, but most of the folks in this were in that—so it makes sense that these heads have a handle of the make-up of a song. I don't mean two minutes of noise... I

mean a *song*... you know? Something that grabs you by the neck, not just grooves in black plastic. By no means am I calling these cats "old," but I'm sure they've spent time with the Real Kids and the Shoes, and I'll bet my last dollar they are familiar with the Tranzmitors and the Marked Men. This is *reallllly* well crafted pop punk. I'm not talking kids in the mall pop punk; I'm talking late '70s skinny tie shit. Really great guys... really great. —Tim Brooks (Dead Broke)

STRIPMINES: Crimes of Dispassion: LP

Dark, claustrophobic hardcore from North Carolina that shifts constantly, on top of frantic drumming with ripping solos that fade in and out of nowhere, and devastating riffage that leaves me short of breath. Obvious influences like Deathgrip collide with even more esoteric crusty hardcore and tight, organic rhythms. This thing fucking slays and is tomorrow's classic for fans of the Prank Records style of hardcore. Get this immediately! —Ian Wise (Sorry State)

SWEARIN': Self-titled: LP

Wow! What an amazing debut. It doesn't happen all that often, but every once and a while I'll come across a record that knocks me on my ass and leaves me staring at the player, waiting to flip it over and over and over again. And this record made me do just that. Simply perfect pop, punk, rock... whatever... with deeply personal lyrics that seems to draw

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from a variety of influences, from That Dog to Future Virgins to Guided By Voices, that somehow gets better with every listen. Listening reminds me of the time a friend and I took two days to drive the 350 mile Oregon coast: "Pull over! This is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen!" "No wait, this is!" I'm finding myself doing similar with this record: "This is totally my favorite song!" "No wait, this is!" A definite contender for record of the year. —Chris Mason (Salinas, salinasrecords.com)

SWEETPUPS: Self-titled: CDEP

Bubble gum popping, hair twirling power pop from this Seattle quartet pervade these five tracks. Forged on hooky choruses resulting in a pre-adolescent version of Le Tigre, the Pups are helmed by snappy female vocals that pogo through the various stages of courtship dating. The Pups stray into Sleater K territory with "No Clue" for a darker shade of pop'n'roll. Perfect for those riding the pink cloud of infatuation. —Kristen K. (Self-released, facebook.com/sweetpupsseattle)

SYNTAX ERROR: Self-titled: 7" EP

A sort of spiritual precursor to the Medical Tourists, this sounds kinda like someone being inspired to start a synth-punk band after spending all afternoon listening to Black Flag's "Loose Nut" album. I'm not sure what exactly happened to the band; i can only assume someone found where the missing semicolon went and they disappeared. BEST SONG:

"Transistor Love" BEST SONG TITLE: "Ashamed To Be Human" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Run-off grooves say "CASIO FUZZ," surely mitigating all doubt on the matter. —Rev. Nørh (Rerun)

TECHNICOLOR TEETH:

Teenage Pagans: Cassette

Stoned-to-all-hell, psychedelic-tinged Hüsker Dü/Replacements rock. Features Amos from Tenement on drums; not that the two bands sound anything alike. The music is ambient to be heard over other layers of sound. It's the musical equivalent of heat waves on a hot summer's day, leaving a trail of distorted images, cloaked in the warmth of the sun. This is a sonic journey to the faraway places only told in stories from long ago. We are peeping into a dimension not meant for human understanding and walk away with these echoes etched in our memories. Behold the Lovecraftian psych pop. Let your mind fall out and give this a whirl. —Bryan Static (Let's Pretend, letspretendrecords.com)

THEM MARTYRS: Wretched: 12" EP

What happens when you extract the heaviness of Botch, the depressing mood Buzzoven puts you in, and the best metal-influenced guitar licks carried over from the last Doomriders album? You get a quality metalcore record without the glossy cover magazine posturing or the boredom brought on by dozens upon dozens of

open-air festival bands who can't seem to understand that heavy music is just no good without up-to-par songwriting. Great stuff. —Juan Espinosa (Randall / Girth / Champion Edition)

TIGON: Infinite Teeth: CD

This is really good in the all the ways that really good music fucking blows. It's over-talented, methodical, intentional, and soulless. It's math rock; boring-ass, redundant math rock with that Louisville / Chicago building-to-a-shout vocal that's so familiar that I can't even put my finger on which twenty or thirty bands did it first for the sake of reference. I was so underwhelmed by this that I googled it just to find a new way to describe a sound I've heard and written about so many times. I was shocked to see so many metal, stoner, and sludge-type blogs rave about this band as if they were playing something interesting. Have they not heard generic post-hardcore or math rock before? Maybe not. They described it as metal at times and talked about how exciting and bad-ass it was. Some even compared it to Neurosis. They also call it noise rock in a lot of reviews, which must have been written on a one-sheet that I didn't get because it's only noisy in the most literal sense of the word—it's loud, but only between all of the ho-hum stop / start parts. Whatever. These guys need to put the bong down and learn how to play something with soul. Limited teeth. —Craven Rock (The Ghost Is Clear)

TOUGH SHITS, THE: Self-titled: LP

This is a solid rock record pushing poppier riffs into tougher territory. The vocals and faster material remind me a bit of The Exploding Hearts. The liner notes list everyone as a vocalist. It shows in the range of harmonies they pull off regularly. It's a good party record to stick in among your more rambunctious stuff. A standout is keyboardist Nick Carlisi who has a good vocabulary of rock-inspired riffs. I'm okay with lazy keyboards, but Carlisi can actually play. The cover is an awesome cartoon by Human Being Lawnmower's Avi Spivak. —Billups Allen (Burger)

TOY CANNONS: Self-titled: LP

Twelve-song debut from this Philly-based combo. Fronted by ex-Gerund Ben Goldberg, this band throws all their influences against the wall like those wacky Wallcrawlers—and most of it sticks. Pixies-like guitar, quirky keyboards, and smooth backbeats from the rhythm section make each song a new sonic adventure. Ex-Dag Nasty vocalist Peter Cortner contributes on two songs, sounding like Lou Reed on one tune and Richard Butler on the other one. Super groovy. —Sean Koeppenick (Self-released-toycannons@thetoycannons.com)

TROUBLED SLEEP:

Whacky Past Is Now: 7" EP

Listening to this, I'm reminded of early '90s indie pop, in particular the bands that were coming out

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of the DC area, which to me, was pretty good. In fact, it was one of the better things, musically, about that decade. Troubled Sleep are sort of like *Copacetic*-era Velocity Girl, but less sugary, and rough edges kept intact. Kind of like something you would hear on Simple Machines or SpinArt. It's kind of punk in feel, but not punk in sound. Kind of strange descriptive, I know. But maybe you get what I'm saying. They don't get wrapped up in sappy songs or precious lyrics, unlike a lot of pop. The songs are very well structured and executed, the guitar has a meandering way about it, and the rhythm section propels ever-forward. I get the sense of possibility listening to this record, and I listen to it daily. All the songs on here are fantastic, but "Bald Spot," with the change up at the end... Whoa! How it builds up with "Eat with us, work for us..." to "All work and no play makes Mary a dull boy..." and how it builds up in tempo is awesome. Like the records of Unrest, Tsunami, Velocity Girl, etc. from twenty years ago figured heavily into my life at that time (and still do to some degree), this record is part of the soundtrack to my life now. —M.Avrq (Puzzle Pieces, puzzlepiecesrecords.bigcartel.com, puzzlepiecesrecords@gmail.com)

TUHKAUS: Self-titled: 7"
Finnish hardcore duo that reminds me of Crudos with elements of Scandinavian

hardcore thrown in for good measure. There are seconds of harmonizing in the guitars that come in at unexpected times and some disjointed, noisy guitar solos that pile more noise on top of the chaos. It rages throughout and strays from the d-beat elements they claim as influences. The recording is nice and clear but still rough around the edges and it's cut loud as hell. This is a co-release between several labels, but they all look like they're Finnish, so this may not be easy to come by in the U.S. —Ian Wise (Roku)

UCHAZIM: Marnostroj: CD
Out of flames rises the sound of lead pipes crashing against skulls. It's chaotic at first, but soon falls into a rhythm. Then the howling begins, the chanting, the pleading. Everything crashes in around one voice. Hands grab the collar of your shirt and you're not sure if they want to pull you into the fire or if they are hoping you will pull them out. This long-running, indescribably intense Czech hardcore band needs to be heard. —MP Johnson (bandzone.cz/uchazim)

UNKNOWN COMPONENT: Blood V. Electricity: CD
The sonic crossroads where Moody Blues, Dead Can Dance, and Tim Buckley meet, this is the work of one guy writin' the tunes and playing all the instruments all by his lonesome. Scary, off-putting description, I reckon, but the songs are well written and served up in a way that manages

to skirt just past sounding annoyingly pretentious. I can dig it, man. —Jimmy Alvarado (Unknown Component, unknowncomponent.com)

UPINATEM: Democracide: CD
Zippy, über-tempoed hardcore with sung—rather than shouted—vocals and a political bent to the lyrics, although they aren't above throwing in a tune or two about being true to the punk rock. They're a tight unit and remind me a little of Pig Children, but that's probably 'cause I'm old and not hip to all the newfangled "fast punk" bands. —Jimmy Alvarado (1332)

USELESS CHILDREN: Post Ending, Pre-Completion: LP
Stepping right into the strange waters of noise rock is not an easy task. But when you have a group of fully capable musicians together such as Useless Children, you can trust them to be your guides in discovering an enjoyable listening experience. However, I do not suggest jumping into this head first. If you haven't already partaken, I suggest dipping your toes into some Swans, Godflesh, and Ministry for good measure. Once you're caught up, just lay back and relish in the hammer-of-the-gods drum bashing, the feedback-drenched guitars, and the insane asylum female/male vocals. Don't be afraid of the hypnotizing noise laced in throughout: it's there strictly for the most perfect damaging effect. For maximum results, turn this fucker up loud and repeat as necessary. —Juan Espinosa (Iron Lung)

UTAH JAZZ: Self-titled: EP
Not what I was expecting. Then again, I didn't really know what to expect from the cover art. I was figuring it could be sappy pop punk with that country/folk thing going on, or some ripping hardcore punk kind of filth. Utah Jazz isn't really any of those. Side A and the first song on the second side, "Media Schlitz," have a psychedelic influence that goes beyond walls of distortion and flange pedals mixed in with a little bit of punk and garage. The psych side comes out more in the use of flutes, actual song composition, and delivery in the song "Florida." Then the last couple songs, and most of the aforementioned "Media Schlitz," are more along the lines of raging punk, with maybe some garage in there, at least what I wish garage would rise up to. This is one of those records that grows on you with each listen. First couple times I was like, "Wha?!?!" then around the third or fourth, it started to click. If anything, it will blow the dust off your musical taste receptors and possibly expose you to something new. I recommend checking out the song "Florida." It's the one I keep going back to. —M.Avrq (Feral Kid, feralkidrecords.com)

VACATION CLUB, THE: Self-titled: Cassette
I'm reviewing a tape, and after all the shit I've talked about tape-only releases! Anyway, I love The Vacation Club. They're currently my favorite Indiana band. A mix of garage, pop,



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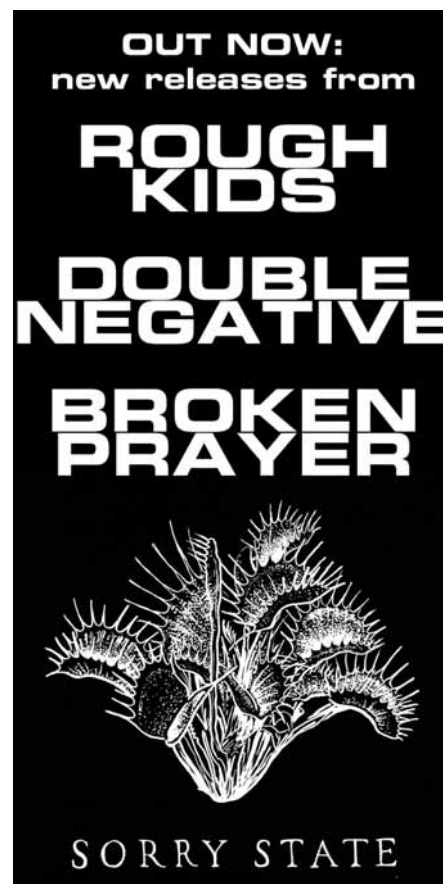


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psych, and something not quite definable but undeniably Midwestern. I finally own a recorded version of "Daydream!" These six songs make up the meat of their live set. They've been touring extensively so I hope the rest of the country catches up to what Indiana already knows. My only complaint is that the low end should be more present. The drummer is tight as hell and I know the bass can be louder 'cause I play a Gibson Ripper too... Includes free digital download. —Sal Lucci (Happenin)

VACATION:

The Do Shit Tape: Cassette

Dirty as fuck poppy party punk. It's hard to judge this purely as what it is since the band has released a 7", an LP, and two songs on compilations since this originally came out. All of these releases show an older band that's learned a few more tricks. As far as this tape stands on its own merits, it has its value. It's good! It is! (Digging the hole deeper and deeper...) Listen, for basically releasing their version of the *and More* part of *Everything Falls Apart and More*, this is quite excellent. Most bands with the same markings of youth can't claim to have a release as killer as the songs included on *The Do Shit Tape*, but their new stuff blows this out of the water. Pick this up, it's great and now there's a whole discography to go to once you're done. (EXTRA BONUS REVIEW: Vacation's "No Mercy" is my favorite song on the Larry Livermore comp. The chorus is

will not leave my head.) —Bryan Static (Dead Broke, deadbrokerecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

A Tribute to Repo Man: CD

The title makes pretty clear what the deal is here: a buncha folks covering one of punkdom's most revered/reviled Hollywood flicks. What you get here is songs originally by Fear, Black Flag, Suicidal Tendencies, the Plugz, Circle Jerks, and others being covered by the likes of Mike Watt and the Secondmen, Matthew Sweet, Those Darlins, and Black Francis, to name a few. The results are surprisingly not as wholly wretched as expected, some of which, like Amanda Palmer's horn-laden reinterpretation of "Institutionalized," actually work well in their own fashion. Wholly went into this expecting to loathe like no one's loathed before, but no, I've definitely heard much, much worse. —Jimmy Alvarado (American Laundromat)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Are You with the Band? A Collection of Female Fronted Pop-Punk: LP

This is an excellent collection of contemporary punk—from the quality of the bands, to the elaborate artwork on high-quality paper, to how its curated so each band is given the opportunity to share their varying thoughts and provide resources to reassure folks that they're not alone. It's all presented with obvious love, devotion, and care. The focus is gender inequality—and the resultant problems of a patriarchal society being reflected

in punk rock. I'm down. To me, it's so easy to see: Why wouldn't you want anyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation or race or limited income or age to *not* be exposed to and participate in DIY punk? Build a bigger boat, I say—and not just the more obvious band-on-stage vs. audience-coming-to-see-a-show dynamic, but all the way to more "invisible" punk occupations—from recording studios to grammarians to photographers to designers to folks who run collective spaces to people who just have their shit together and are willing to help in meaningful ways that we may not even realize today. Open those doors, keep 'em open, and invite in all non-psychopaths, non-predators, non-shitbags. Great stuff. Power to everyone. Power to you. All proceeds go to Planned Parenthood. Thanks Lauren; great and necessary stuff. —Todd Taylor (Paper And Plastick, paperandplastick.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Dead Broke Records Four Way Split Vol. 5: 7" EP

A four way split featuring four Japanese punk bands: you had me at Japanese. I love Japanese punk! Their energy is always something to behold live and more often than not, the quality transpires over onto their recordings. Gleam Garden lead off with some melodic punk that gives Tiltwheel a run for their money. Browntrout follow along in similar fashion but with a more free-flowing, cymbals-splashing-all-over-the-place sort of way. The Because and Your Pest Band both have

a slightly more power pop, rock'n'roll edge to them, but there's certainly nothing wrong with that. All songs are great. They could get any room rocking in no time at all, but what really does it for me is the quality which just screams, "demo quality is punk as fuck!" I also love how both of the final tracks on both sides of the vinyl spill over onto the runoff grooves. Four awesome bands on the best format for punk: Nippon wins again! —Juan Espinosa (Dead Broke)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Grown So Ugly: An Ugly Things Record Sampler: Cassette

At twenty-five song sampler from Ugly Things Records releases. Included in this cassette are tracks from the Misunderstood's *Lost Acetates* and the long lost Pretty Things album *Philippe Debarge*. It's an awesome starter for those uninitiated with eclectic '60s psyche. If you already have a good load of these Ugly Things releases, it's a good tape to have in the car, bong room, or spaceship. —Billups Allen (Burger)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

PVC H.Ex Compilation #1: Cassette

Washed-out, lo-fi-everything rock. At its best, it rings true with a nostalgic approach to the underbelly of '80s rock. At its worst, it's a meandering sludge of incoherent bullshit. It averages out to a pretty fun compilation. Feels like channel surfing on basic cable late at night, watching scenes from various low budget movies. The sport

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becomes what strangeness you expect to find next. —Bryan Static (PVC H.Ex, pvchex.com)

VOIGHT-KAMPFF: Self-titled: Cassette
Not at all what you'd expect from a long distance project involving members from Minneapolis' Formaldehyde Junkies and St. Louis's the Breaks: this is some compelling dark punk ala the current crop of Northwestern bands, such as the Estranged, Criminal Code, and the Red Dons. Speaking of Red Dons, I'm hearing a lot of the Observers' magic with the in-your-face vocals and the way the guitar hooks weave in and out of a driving rhythm section. Perfect for punks who aren't precious about where they shelve their Joy Division records. Voight-Kampff have apparently been collaborating for over seven years now and have more releases lined up, including a 7" on Firestarter under their previous moniker, Run Down. If this cassette is telling of what's in store, then I offer to you my highest possible recommendation. —Juan Espinosa (Self-released, getbornbeat@yahoo.com)

WEIRD PARTY:

The Secret Lives of Men: 7"

Ex-Fatal Flying Guilloteens playing two hundred proof, no-holds-barred garage punk. It sounds like the band was raised on a steady diet of the Stooges and Wire that would pass for a hardcore band if it weren't for the lead guitarist. There's an element of the pure rock persona that eludes my ability to articulate on this record. I can visualize

the lead singer's strut as he belts out the shouted melodies, feel the sweat of the band through the record, and hear the hearing loss from a show I've never seen. Playing the one word essence challenge, I would choose the word: unfiltered. —Bryan Static (Twistworthy, twistworthy.com)

WHITE WHALE:

"No Solace" b/w "Waxing": 7"

The A-side sounds like High Tension Wires meets the Modern Machines. (Or is it more appropriate to say it sounds like Riverboat Gamblers meets Bruce Springsteen?) The B-side sounds like Samiam meets Shang-A-Lang. (Or is it more appropriate to say it sounds like Jawbreaker meets Gaunt?) I'm going to steal a line from my favorite politician Leslie Knope, and say the White Whale's "ambiguous ethnic blend perfectly represents the dream of the American melting pot" except with music instead of skin color. —Bryan Static (Feral Kid, feralkidrecords.com)

WHITE WIRES:

"Crazy" b/w "I Need Your Love": 7"

The White Wires are top shelf, small batch distillers. Raw materials that are in bountiful in supply are run through plumbing pipes of primitive rock'n'roll, wiggled through the white glass of long, clarifying Ottawan winters, cooked and reduced over the blue flames in copper pots. The result is two clean-and-brilliant-sounding songs. Sure, The White Wires could be called garage, but their garage is

immaculately organized. This one's got a bar in it where they serve only one form of alcohol. It'll fuck you up in dignified ways. There's no hangover, no walk of shame the next morning. Unnervingly easy to like, The White Wires are both intoxicated and in full control. —Todd Taylor (Total Punk)

WHITE WIRES: WWIII: LP

After two nearly flawless LPs I would have thought impossible to say that White Wires have really stepped it up on this record, but that's just what they've done. So yeah, if the two previous records were *almost* perfect, I have to say that this record is about as perfect as it gets. The intermittent jokey songs that I always found a bit off-putting on their previous records are gone, leaving room for fourteen infectious garage pop singalongs without a hint of filler. And perhaps this record is a bit more "mature," but it's still unmistakably a White Wires record. In fact, I've yet to think of a single suitable comparison, which is great when you realize that their songs generally consist of between two and four chords. Brilliant! —Chris Mason (Dirtnap, dirtnaprecs.com)

WOLVES AT BAY: Only a Mirror: LP

Prototypical, unintimidating emo-core with Victory Records-styled production values. You're looking for *Decibel*, guys. Not us. —Juan Espinosa (Animal Style, animalstylerecords.com)

ZEBRAS: Self-titled: LP

The sides of the LP were recorded a couple years apart, and it's interesting to trace this band's evolution. Basically, Zebras are a skewed, gloomy metal band with a Moog. The earlier material borrows the surging dynamics of chaotic hardcore, while the newer stuff was recorded with a more precise drummer, and moves into Today Is The Day/Am-Rep territory. It's got catchy moments and brutal moments and the whole thing is just recorded with bile. Certainly not a fun listen, but definitely a good one. —Chris Terry (Secret)

ZULUS: Self-titled: CD

Bauhaus, Specimen, and some of the most notable of '80s U.K. goth punk is resurrected by these blokes out of NYC. Where others have resorted to imitation as flattery, Zulus has reformatted the old standard of Peter Murphy cries and thrumming bass lines. "Kisses" draws on a whale call of a guitar chord to flesh out a cacophonous death knell of relationships past. The tail end of the album turns the corner toward hardcore punk on "Tremolo" with a spastic crescendo of drums and guitars. The production is a little muddy, but their revamp of ghoul tunes shines through the flotsam. Those who own Tones On Tail and The Chameleons UK, take note. Who says every day isn't Halloween? Recommended. —Kristen K. (Aagoo, aagoo.com)

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—Chris Terry
MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #351

BITE THE CACTUS: GOD EQUALS GENOCIDE RATTLED MIND

TOUR 2012, 4¼" x 5½", copied, 14 pgs.
As the title suggests, this is a brief tour journal from the God Equals Genocide West Coast tour from earlier this year by Adrian Chi (who you might recognize from her column in here, if you want to check out her art ahead of time). As it is, I feel like God Equals Genocide already embodies the classic punk ideals in today's world better than most bands, and Adrian's comics have a similar feel to me. She manages to cram a lot of stories into not a lot of space. It's definitely a great introduction into her work. —Joe Evans III (facebook.com/BiteTheCactus)

BOOKSTORE THIEF #1-3,

8½" x 5½", 20 pgs.
Bookstore Thief is a small zine comprised of one main story and a few other shorter ones. The whole concept behind *Bookstore Thief* is that it is an ongoing zine that publishes reader-submitted stories. There isn't any checking to see if these stories are true or false, but they make an entertaining read nonetheless. This particular issue is actually about a bookstore thief, and seems to be pretty genuine. It's extremely well written, and I'm looking forward to the next issue. —James Meier (Alterior Motives, 4513 41st Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406)

BURN COLLECTOR #16, \$5,

5½" x 8½", copied, 40 pgs.
Al Burian could write about anything with incisive wit and humor—it's his greatest strength, and sometimes the problem too. Having read almost every fanzine he's ever put out—I'm always astonished at the consistent quality of the writing—but sometimes he's not really saying anything, but just lost in a train of thought on *anything* (albeit usually at least a funny one). That's how I've felt lately about his more "personal memoir"-type pieces; they neither open up into their own self-encapsulated worlds, reaching a fever pitch of drama and neuroses, nor does he whack as many proverbial moles—he still looks good swinging, but the mallet's

coming down on more and more empty holes. But there's good news: the man is multi-talented! He's genuinely an artistic renaissance man. He provides two great interviews with old friends of his, Tim Remis (musician), and Sascha Scatter (musician, mental health activist), a couple of good cartoons, and a series of reviews of everything from a Little Richard single to Patty Hearst's memoirs. The reviews are a better use of his ability to write about anything. Having a specific target to zone in on lets him really wind up, and the pay-off is generally more rewarding. It's fantastic stuff, as usual. —Dave Brainwreck (pegacornpress.blogspot.com)

EAST VILLAGE INKY, THE #50,

\$3, photocopied, 40 pgs.
This is a manically written and inside joke-laden zine about zine fests. There's a big section on checking baggage and going on Gwen Paltrow's no-carb diet, so that's a little tedious. Aside from the zine reviews (which are super illuminating) throughout most of this issue I felt lost, like I'd picked up a note written to someone I didn't know. Probably people who've been reading this zine for a while will enjoy it more. —Katie Dunne (Ayun Halliday, PO Box 22754, Brooklyn, NY 11202)

ERIC MCDAVID \$1,

8½" x 5½", 10 pgs.
This zine is a short biography of Eric McDavid, an environmental activist who was unjustly arrested for "conspiracy to damage and destroy property by fire and an explosive." The zine likens this to "thought-crime," which immediately made me want to pick this one up. I'll read anything with a 1984 reference. The zine goes into detail about how Eric was unjustly detained and all the hardships he had to go through even before he could get a trial. It also goes into a little detail on the green scare, a governmental movement that is likened to the red scare and communism. After doing some research, I have found the zine to be very accurate, and somewhat infuriating, as someone is serving a twenty year sentence for an accusation. There are similar zines floating around

about other green activists that are worth a look at as well. —James Meier (SPS, PO Box 163126, Sacramento, CA 95816)

FEEDBACK #11, \$2,

5½" x 7½", copied, 48 pgs.
Imagine if Ben Snakepit didn't limit the recounting of his whole day to three panels, and quit smoking weed in order to make it to more shows, and drew in less of a hurry, and you might have a good idea of what this zine is like. Most of this consists of a reproduced flier from a show, then a comic about the author's time at the show. He has a good pace and punchiness for the medium he uses, and he can't hide the fact that he is a total scumbag. He's always trying to get drink tickets, or free admission, or buying the gross, crappy, cheap food instead of stuffing his face with luxury like his friends. Now, I love a good scumbag, and this guy seems like a nice, insightful, good-humored one, and a total music nerd to boot. All good ingredients for a show review zine. Bonus, and a little more boring, is the record/zine reviews in the end: no pictures, and far less magic than the show reviews, but all in all this is a good zine. —Dave Brainwreck (John Isaacson, PO Box 42041, Portland, OR 97242)

FILLING THE VOID \$5,

8½" x 7", copied, 56 pgs.
Drinking and substance problems are hard things to deal with. Not just personally, but also within friendships and communities. Quitting altogether has helped a lot of people, but being preachy, dogmatic, or prescriptive is not any way to help someone who is struggling with a substance. This zine is a good resource in case anyone wanted to think about quitting, or was curious about what it's been like for people in the punk community. The seven interviews within go pretty in-depth about personal drinking/using histories, how they came to quit, and what that's looked like for them—a popular writer of a booze-heavy zine examines how he had to restructure *everything* he did to evaporate the alcohol intrinsic to his socializing and activities; a non-religious, generally shy person finds

that AA is the only thing that could've gotten them to quit, etc. There is lots of nitty-gritty about what the day-to-day looks like: how you cope with being asked to pass someone a beer, how to hang out outside of drinking situations, what some helpful ways to occupy your time are. The interviews are conducted really well, done by people who have quit themselves, and are really perceptive and insightful. Having watched how hard it's been for a lot of my friends to follow this path, but how mostly those who have are in a fantastic place and super thankful they had the strength to quit, I am very grateful this zine was put together. If you're curious at all about quitting, maybe check this thing out. —Dave Brainwreck (Doris Press, PO Box 29, Athens, OH 45701, dorisdorisdoris.com)

FIRE AND ICE \$5, 3" x 5", printed, 52 pgs.

A zine of "warm, cool, and spicy vegan recipes," which I couldn't try out myself because I only have a little camper stove at home and cooking complicated things is a pain in the ass (who am I kidding, I wouldn't have anyway), but which look inventive and delicious, as well as appropriately spicy. These are all from the twisted mind of Joshua Ploeg, who is probably a big fat nobody to most of you, but has done a whole bunch of cool, admirable stuff with his life (and this is only from my peripheral knowledge of his projects since I was in high school) like running a legendary underground restaurant in Seattle, singing in the fantastic Behead The Prophet, and doing fundraising meals for the awesome Vera Project, a Gilman-esque youth-run music venue in Seattle, without which I would have likely dropped punk like a bad habit after a brief flirtation in eighth grade, in which case I wouldn't be sitting here in a college library typing out zine reviews, so it is my obligation to blindly (taste-blindly?) give this zine the highest recommendation possible, which I don't feel too unethical about because from what I've actually heard, this guy's recipes cannot fail to blow your mind. Vegans, take note! —Dave Brainwreck (cantankeroustitles.com)

FURY, THE #20, \$1,
5½" x 8½", copied, 40 pgs.
I used to write off zines like this (and this is what Freud calls "projection"), but actually, who cares how much this writing style is ripped from *Cometbus*? Things are framed with the same cracked, dirty, rose-tinted glasses and phrased with a very similar rhythm, but the writer is an excellent ruminator on life and punk, someone who deeply feels the world before trying to fight it out onto the page, and it makes most of the pieces in here great. Of course it could benefit from not sharing

MAXIMUM ROCK 'N' ROLL #351,
\$4, newsprint, 8.5" x 11", 144 pgs.
I credit Green Day's *Dookie* with getting me into punk. I got that CD when I was fifteen and the musicians on the album were about twenty-two. That was eighteen years ago. When I was in junior high, *Houses of the Holy* by Led Zeppelin was eighteen years old, and that shit was ancient! So, I wonder, has the music of my youth become classic rock? Am I the 2012 version of my well intentioned but clueless music teacher Mr. Rossini, who had a Wayne's World "Not!" poster in his classroom? If the Descendents are fifty, is

away from going through the "justice" system and gives guidelines on how to set up supportive communities and relationships. The zine gets very in-depth for only twenty pages, and might be able to help out some people who don't really know the best ways to grasp and understand the varieties of domestic violence. —James Meier (Riotgrrrrr Press, PO Box 29, Athens, OH45701)

PLASTIQUE POP #7, \$2,
7" x 7", 38 pgs.
This issue features interviews with artists Jason Potter and Ben Lyon,

just being contributed to *MRR* or *Give Me Back* in little pieces. "100% music zines have no personality," Joe writes, reviewing another zine, "and 100% per-zines have no hardcore in them." That Joe finds a dilemma there should give you a pretty good idea of what this zine is about. An ironic and infuriating highlight is when a contributor talks about getting turned off by the fucked up things that pop punk kids say, and then calls them "mongoloids." Uh, fuck that too, man! —Dave Brainwreck (Joe Lachut, PO Box 457, Ft. Myers, FL, 33902-0457)

"Now, I love a good scumbag, and this guy seems like a nice, insightful, good-humored one, and a total music nerd to boot."

—Dave Brainwreck | **FEEDBACK #11**

so much with a well-known voice, but if those are the tools Mark uses best, I'd say the trade-off is worth it. My favorite was the one-two punch of a queasy, scrunched face made at one-night stands (a deliberately self-reflective and un-"cool" stance) followed by the story of facing the reality of senseless violence, all drawn from one clarifying moment while out walking with a good friend—a story that gives perspective on a great deal of factors that run throughout the lives of confused, angry men (good and bad) who find themselves drawn to punk. A solid effort, sung in a familiar style but with fresh, thoughtful lyrics. —Dave Brainwreck (Mark Novotny, 5413 6th Ave, Countryside, IL 60525, thefuryzine@hotmail.com)

GENEVA 13 #17, \$2,
5½" x 8½", copied, 60 pgs.
Conceptually, this zine is awesome—every issue has a different theme, and the different contributors tackle it while staying within the thirteen-mile radius around Geneva, NY. Often, even with the local focus, the pieces are entirely accessible and interesting to non-residents of Geneva. This issue's theme is "neighborhood," so most of this stuff was hyper-local, even by this zine's standards. So some of this, like the demographics statistics and local history, went in one eye and out the other for me. There were still pieces I found fascinating. A reprinting of most of the testimonial from the angered black community in Geneva after the murder of a local resident by the police was a terrible, tragic read, and unfortunately one easy to connect with a larger pattern outside of Geneva. Also included are interviews, photos, music recommendations, etc. I wish every small town had one of these. —Dave Brainwreck (PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14456, mail@geneva13.com)

it creepy for them to sing their old songs about high school girls? I'm asking these questions because this is *MRR*'s thirtieth anniversary issue and, less than a year after *Dookie*, I started buying *MRR*, recognizing it as the standard-bearer for DIY punk journalism. And it still is now, to the point where it's difficult to review. What's new to say about a consistently interesting magazine, that has published 351 issues? Aside from their usual columns, reviews and interviews (God Equals Genocide!), this issue features questionnaire and survey results, and a little *MRR* history in the form of a gallery of famous and infamous covers. Here's hoping that someone who just bought a (insert mainstream punk band) album this past summer picks this up and is transformed. —Chris Terry (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

MODERN BROPAR #9,
5½" x 8½", photocopied, 14 pgs.
Tour diaries by a guy who roadied for MDC and Bones Brigade back in the early 2000s. —Craven Rock (matt.emmerich@gmail.com)

NEW TO EVERYTHING #9, \$1 or
trade, photocopied, 4½" x 5½", 40 pgs.
Leanne writes about her life—personal and familial struggles with alcohol, teaching rich brats, punk shenanigans in the shadow of encroaching adulthood—in a subtle, plainspoken way that almost sneaks the revelations past the reader. Her writing is honest and insightful without being pretentious and I'm down for more of it. —Chris Terry (Leanne, 1799 W. 5th Ave. #368, Columbus, OH 43212)

OUR OWN RESPONSE \$1,
8½" x 5½", 20 pgs.
Our Own Response tries to create healthier communities by addressing the issues of domestic violence. The zine defines domestic violence to specifics and goes into what can be done to help both the survivors and the abusers in domestic violence situations. It shies

and bands The Vignettes and Ramma Lamma. There is also an interview with the head of Big Action Records and two short stories. The layout is quality but the interviews, while well-done, weren't of interest to me since I didn't know who these individuals or bands were. A good interview should be able to draw a reader in, even if they're not interested in the interviewee. While the line of questions was far better than most zine interviews, I still didn't feel intrigued by the people being interviewed. However, I enjoyed Adam Widener's short story, but wish it had a better ending, as it seemed a bit abrupt. I suppose if you're a fan of any of the aforementioned artists or bands, though, this might be worth checking out. —Kurt Morris (1723 S. 1st St., Milwaukee, WI 53204, plastiquepop@hotmail.com)

SEVEN INCHES TO FREEDOM #9,
\$2, 5½" x 8½", copied, 48 pgs.
I can't quite remember the formula—I always get it confused with dog years—but at twenty-eight, *SITF*'s Joe Lachut clocks in at somewhere around forty-five-years-old in punk years. As far as this zine is concerned, that's a damn good thing. One of the main articles in this issue is about how well punk is aging, and how gracefully punks can age in punk (does that make sense?). While the author isn't quite sure, this zine itself is a pretty good case for the virility of "aging" punks. Put together with the self-assured touch of someone who has been laying out inserts and writing lyrics for years, this zine stands out because that mastery is paired with Joe's confident and intimate knowledge of exactly what punk means to him (although he would say "hardcore"). This takes form each issue in his interviews, essays, reviews, and more. With a handful of contributors, this zine reads to me like a smaller-scale *MRR* with its own distinct flavor, and that is definitely preferable to all this material

SLICE HARVESTER #6, \$3,
8½" x 5½", copied, 56 pgs.
I love this zine/blog/public works project. One man sets out to review every slice of pizza in Manhattan (about 360) with all his freaky friends (maybe one hundred?) giving second opinions. The reviews are documented in these quarterly zines, and even though he's finished Manhattan (!), the zines are still catching up with him. *Slice Harvester* has followed this awesome trajectory of going from being one of your patented silly-sounding, hare-brained schemes that you bullshit about when drunk into becoming an all-consuming and important creative endeavor. Not that knowing in detail what the slice at Ben's Pizzeria is like is that important, but Colin takes cues from everything—his friends, the decor in the pizzeria, the surliness of the guy behind the counter, the way the grease is pooling on top of the cheese, etc.—to withdraw the scope a bit and address any number of thoughts his mind is turning over. Insight into the development of Manhattan into a Disneyland for the cosmopolitan rich, the way punks and fuck-ups sort out their lives, friendship, loss, our patriarchal society, and much more is delivered with great sensitivity, thought, and humor. I love this because everything about it—Colin's stories, opinions, the format, the stupid, hopeless impossibility of it all, and its walloping effectiveness—were all shaped in a large way by punk rock, and that makes this not only a fantastic zine but an inspiring one as well, demonstrative of what we can do if we just actually stick to what we say, no matter how stupid it sounds, and put in a little hard work and discipline. Do not read if you are prone to impulsively buying pizza—this shit makes you crave hard. —Dave Brainwreck (Colin Atrophy, 442-D Lorimer St. #230, Brooklyn, NY 11206, sliceharvester.com)

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SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

#66, free, 36 pgs.

The bulk of this one is a collection of music reviews, but the catch is Billy's only reviewing music that was released on cassette tape, so a lot of them are from the '80s and '90s. There's quite a big section on Key Records and New Generation, and a bunch of Mark Krischak stuff, and there are several Christian punk bands reviewed. Even if that's not your thing, it's still pretty intriguing, plus, Billy offers to make copies of anything you're interested in! -Katie Dunne (516 Third St NE, Massillon, OH 4464)

SPARE CHANGE #24,

\$2, photocopied, 20pgs.

The Rev. Tom Foote pairs up some striking haiku with irreverent prank answers to those junk mailers telling you to buy life insurance or install a geriatric shower for cheap. There are also some cryptic allusions to saving the USPS, and it's presumed that by taking advantage of those Business Reply Mail cards, he's letting the post office cash in on his tomfoolery. -Katie Dunne (PO Box 6023, Chattanooga, TN 37401)

STOWAWAYS, THE #11-#12, \$1, stamps or trade, photocopied, stapled. I opened issue #11 to find Christopher personally thanking me for my

criticizing his full-size, stapled layout in an earlier review. But he says he wants to stick to the size because he likes it and it's easier to lay out every month. First of all, Christopher, it's your zine and you can do whatever you want with it, I'm just here to say what I feel. Second, if you're doing a zine by yourself *every month* it's pretty ridiculous for me to critique whatever corners you choose to cut. That said, I'm glad to be witness to the beginnings of this zine (at issue twelve, it's only a year old) and I hope to see where this one goes. Each issue is mostly reviews: show reviews, then record reviews and zine reviews by the ever-enthusiastic Christopher. It's an un-ironic, un-jaded breath of fresh air and although there's nothing I am more uninterested in than show reviews (at least until I get that time machine working), he manages to offer a bit of personal insight and criticism to personalize them, such as commenting on the machismo attitude of one of the bands he sees and how it makes him feel uncomfortable. I'm most partial to his zine reviews, though. I have the same criticisms of his interview style (in #11 he interviews Wild Moth, in #12 Ten Thousand Leagues) as I had with earlier issues. The questions are dull and unchallenging; they're about stuff like when the band got together and about their next record. I think

interviews should be written as if the reader never heard of the band, because I haven't. So I care very little about when their next record is coming out or why someone quit the band, and I'm left with no desire to seek to them out. Otherwise, *The Stowaways* is kicking ass in its twelfth issue and first year. -Craven Rock (The Stowaways, 5082 Wendover Rd., Yorba Linda, CA 92886, romancandlesmusic@gmail.com)

TOOTH SOUP \$11,

photocopied, 36 pgs.

This zine is included in a package with a fourteen-track CD, stickers, and an awesome embroidered patch. There's also some beautiful artwork by Emily, a comic, and some poetry. Tooth Soup is a folk punk group on Plan-it-X Records. They go for that Andrew Jackson Jihad vibe, with songs about adventures, loneliness, and idealism. In the track listing, each song has an explanation for what it is about, and most of the explanations are longer than the songs. Breaking down what you mean for your listener can come across as patronizing, but since the record came as a package with a zine and everything, its effect is slightly more endearing than condescending. -Katie Dunne (Plan-it-X Records, PO Box 2312, Bloomington, IN 47402)

UPHEAVAL #15, \$4 US, \$5 Can./Mex., \$6 World, 5½" x 8½", copied, 36 pgs.

Upheaval is a hardcore fanzine with an international focus and interviews with Overkill For Profit from Azerbaijan, Co-Arse from the Philippines, and Keith Bennett. The two band interviews are done pretty well. I enjoy reading the experiences and perspectives of bands I don't know anything about, especially when they're talking about punk in a place I have no direct interface with or access to. The most interesting, and troubling, interview was the one with the author's longtime friend, Keith Bennett. From the tone of the interview and certain things mentioned, it seems like Keith has alienated and made problems with lots of people (and probably vice versa). I like this interview. I don't like everything that's said in it but I like the idea behind it: discussing your friend's problems with him as someone he can open up to, and knowing that it will end up published in a fanzine for everyone to see. Lots of record reviews and a comic fill the rest of this out. -Dave Brainwreck (upheaval.fanzine@gmail.com)



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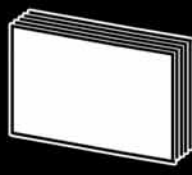
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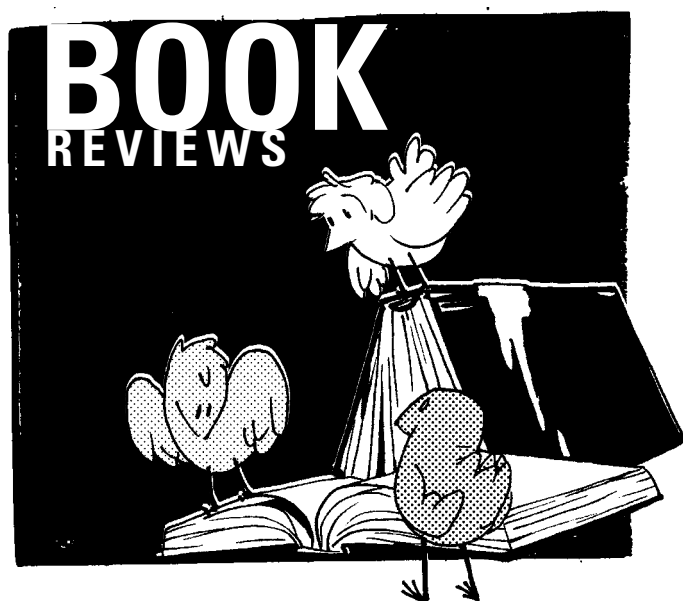
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By Oriana Small, 310 pgs.

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And as with the most honest soldier's memoir, you look forward to finishing it even as you can't put it down—you hit the halfway point of this 310-page book, and you've already read chapters entitled "Double Anal,"

restless instead. Frustrated, Cummings told them, "Write poetry, for god's sake. It's the only thing that matters." Then he stormed out of the room. This story has stuck with me for years, in part because Cummings was a combat veteran of World War I. He lived through the Great Depression and World War II. And after living through what we're taught are the major events of the twentieth century, Cummings came to the conclusion that his art was the most meaningful thing in life.

I thought of this while reading Joe Meno's *Office Girl*. As the description on the cover of the book points out, "No one in it dies. Nobody talks about the international political situation. There is no mention of economic collapse. Nothing takes place during a World War." Instead, it tells the story of Odile and Jack, two hipsters being sucked into the life of office drones and resisting the pull by creating an art movement. As the book begins, Odile is cursing herself for falling for a married man. Jack is watching his marriage slip away and dealing with it in all the wrong ways. They both lose jobs and end up working together at a company that sells Muzak. Their affair begins to blossom in the downtime when they're not taking telephone orders from dentist offices. The book, then, is about their affair.

It's easy to define this book by what it's not. In addition to the things that the book cover mentions, it's also not a typical love story. There is no real love triangle, no choice for the plucky heroine to make. There's no simple miscommunication that can be solved by a hero running through the rain to make a breathless speech to a heroine. Instead, Meno creates rounded characters. They populate our lives (or past lives). They make mistakes that we as an audience recognize. They learn to love the way we all do it: through a series of painful mistakes.

In a way, *Office Girl* is somewhat of a rewriting of *Annie Hall*, but I like Meno's characters a whole lot more than Woody Allen's. Also, though I haven't focused on it thus far, the art in Jack and Odile's life matters. It's rough and sometimes silly. It gropes for something deeper. It flirts with real creativity. It creates a parallel to their affair. They stumble and claw to make something radiant and meaningful, but they're just not there yet.

"Like a blistering war memoir, with penises instead of bayonets."

—Jim Woster, *Girlvert: A Porno Memoir*

"Pissmop," "Gonorrhea," "Choked Out," "Anal Fisting," "Ass Herpes," and you think, *There's more? Oh, well, if she can live it, the least I can do is read it.*

Harold Pinter said, "Life is beautiful, but the world is hell." The theme of *Girlvert* is, "Porn is great, but porn's men are vile." (Not that I'd want to spend more than three minutes with the walking id that Small presents as her self-portrait.)

Small loves the exploration and performance that porn offers, but here in the 21st century, the world of porn doesn't seem a whole lot safer for women than it did when it was underground and run by the Mob—the men in *Girlvert* range from exploitative to monstrous. And yet Small attempts to be friends with the most (or arguably second-most) evil guy in the book, and that kind of dynamic runs through most of *Girlvert*.

Small writes in a no-tricks, this-is-what-happened style that's reminiscent of Bukowski. *Girlvert's* prose is effortlessly readable—so readable that you're amazed that it's Small's first book and you wonder what authors she's read to get to this skill level.

I'm looking at a list of writers featured in *The Outlaw Bible of American Literature*: Burroughs, Kerouac, Miller, Acker, Spillane, and like that. Maybe Small read these writers and thought, "*Outlaw?*" *I'm going to write the most Outlaw book ever written.* And she pretty much did. (I've never read de Sade.) —Jim Woster (A Barnacle Book, abarnaclebook.com)

Office Girl

By Joe Meno, 293 pgs.

I remember reading a story about e. e. Cummings speaking to a group of undergraduates. It was toward the end of his life. He was one of the most well-known and respected poets of his generation. Despite this, the students weren't giving him the respect he felt he deserved. They acted bored and

And while Meno's characters are still stumbling through art, Meno himself is in full stride. The writing in this novel is crisp and clever. It's art that's at times beautiful without getting in the way of the story. Chicago becomes a character in the novel the way it does in the works of Nelson Algren and Saul Bellow, but it's a Chicago that is between Algren's gritty streets and Bellow's upscale avenues.

Though the affair between Jack and Odile is the only tension, the novel is still a page turner. It's the kind of book that makes you blow off what you're supposed to be doing so you can keep reading. In a sense, with *Office Girl*, Meno returns to the roots of the novel as an art form. When the novel first started to take off in England in the 1700s, all of the most popular books were about love and art. Because, as e. e. Cummings pointed out in the mid-twentieth century, these are the things that matter most. Death and world wars are horrifying. Novels about them allow us to play with our fears and anxieties. In the end, though, they're largely just spectacles and distractions. Love and art, though, are the places where we find real meaning in our lives. —Sean Carswell (Akashic Books, PO Box 1456, NY, NY 10009)

San Pedro Stories

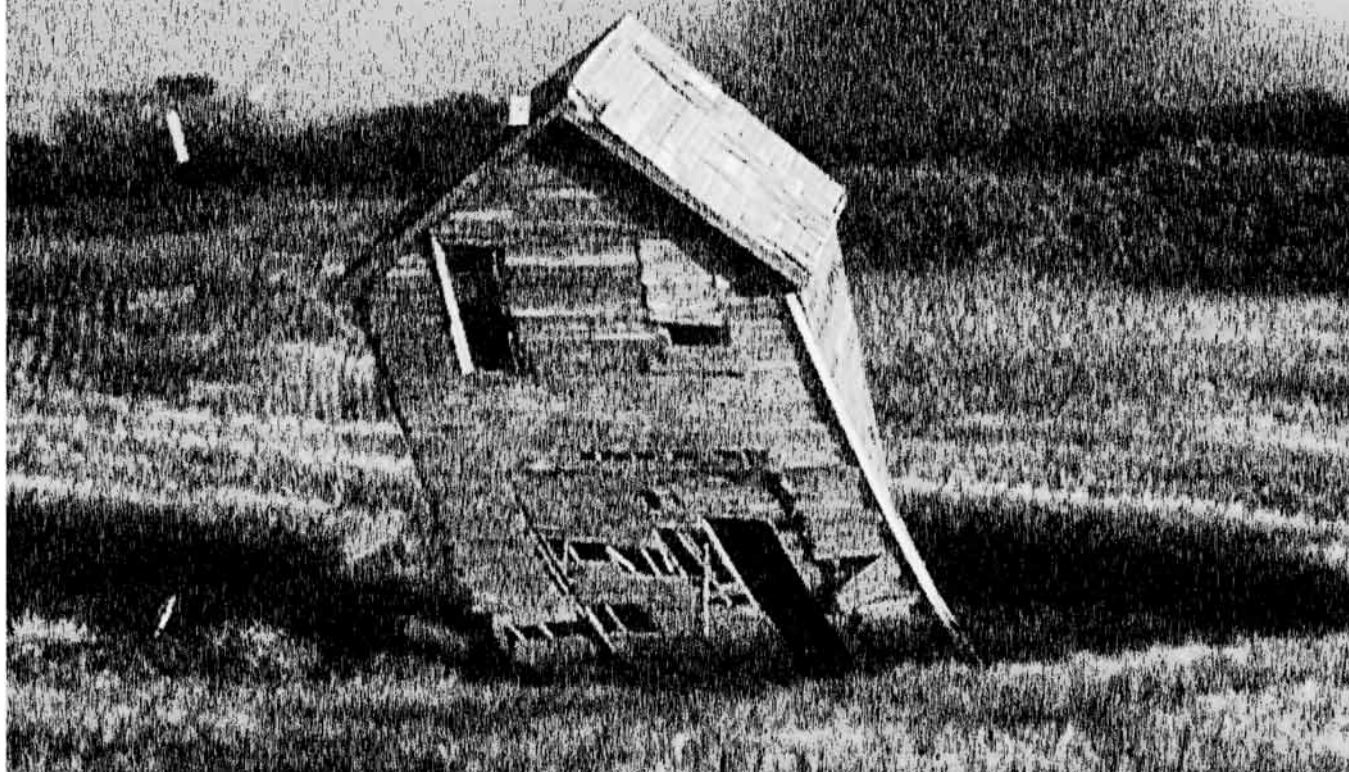
By Matt Sharar, 69 pgs.

Matt deftly rides the rails between literary fiction and *The Twilight Zone* in this collection of five stories. Many of his characters populate a world-in-transition with an impending feel that all is not right, that all won't end well. Having lived in San Pedro and environs his entire life, Matt's got the feel of his neighborhoods down—the ebb and flow, the feeling of both pride and the wanderlust of a port town, the substrata vision that only long-timers and careful observers are capable of. It's the San Pedro that I'm familiar with: Croatians and Hispanics. Longshoremen and

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skaters. Gangsters, families, and bikers intermingling at street fairs. Rocky beaches instead of sand. Grounded in these semiotics—these day-to-day, familiar, tangible symbols that many ingest without second thought—Matt steers his fiction into demons, quick spirals downward, and Jack Chick tract-like comics.

It's in this gradation of lightness to darkness, of, "Oh, that makes perfect sense" to "What the fuck?" that Matt excels. Through analogy, metaphor, and symbolism he creates wobbly worlds that appear perfectly calm on the surface. Are pulp comics really being written by angels and devils when the protagonist is waiting to get a haircut? Are those two dudes fighting a monster at sea or is the main character so unreliable and too far gone to

there were no Germs burns, which is misleading, considering the subtitle suggested there would be.

We live in a day and age where—like putting out a record—it's much easier for an individual not affiliated with a publishing house to release a book. I still don't believe that gives the writer an excuse to not have their work edited. The huge grammatical mistakes (especially the overuse of commas) made this a slightly annoying read. I consider it to be the equivalent of a band with a good sound but a shitty mix. Yeah, the general idea is communicated and it doesn't need to be a work of over-produced major label sound, but you're really depriving the listener of the full potential of the work by not cleaning it up.

“While Meno’s characters are still stumbling through art, Meno himself is in full stride. The writing in this novel is crisp and clever. It’s art that’s at times beautiful without getting in the way of the story.”

—Sean Carswell, *Office Girl*

realize he's battling himself? That type of writing—hallucinatory realism—is a tough gig and, at his best, Matt does just that. “Normal” people can turn out to be really fuckin’ weird if you scratch them hard enough.

My criticism is a matter of taste. I have the suspicion that many of the characters in these stories are “different” Matts transposed into different situations (like “teenage Matt” who wants to join the carnival in “Driver Ed and His Demon” and “science teacher Matt” in “Theatre Dreams” who wants to use logic in the face of a Shakespeare-spouting homeless woman.). It's not overbearing. It's definitely not, “I'm an authorly author. Be dazzled by my writing, morons!”—but an in-the-head, self-conscious, self-reflective treatment. So, the sum total, instead of a clutch of wildly distinct characters who stand on their own, away from their occupations or semiotic roles, I feel that either the narrator or the protagonist is most often a version of Matt, not a distinct population of revolving characters inhabiting stories. In other words—as a reader of short story fiction collections—I'm most interested when the characters in the photograph come to life and speak for themselves. I wish they would more in Matt's stories.

All that said; it's ultimately obvious that Matt takes the craft of writing seriously. He's both talented and driven. It's reassuring to see DIY writers in the 2010s investing in themselves. This self-published book is tightly edited, cleanly laid out, pragmatically printed, and features a Mike Watt on the cover. —Todd Taylor (Mas Productions, 3330 South Peck Ave., Apt. 2, San Pedro, CA 90731)

Self Booked: Empty Bottles, Germs Burns and Bootneck Dreams: True Tales of The Spinns

By Todd J. Colberg, 194 pgs.

Self Booked is another book about an individual's life in a band, but this time it's a band I've never heard of. I wasn't familiar with Todd Colberg's group, The Spinns, thus it meant that the author would have to do a great deal to draw me in. Unfortunately for the author, I do copyediting. This book could have stood to have the intervention of a heavy hand. This lack of editing proved a great hurdle for me to overcome in my appreciation for the book. Nevertheless, my interest in reading about bands and their lives meant that I would inevitably be sucked in.

In telling the story of The Spinns—a garage punk band from North Carolina—Colberg shares the highs and lows, the antics that can only come about when drunk or high (or both), and some amusing anecdotes only loosely related to the band. Thanks to The Spinns' wild and crazy adventures, the book is engaging and I could overlook most of the editing mistakes.

Highlights from *Self Booked* include the times Todd took his dog on tour with the band, fights amongst members, and the group's final cross-country tour in which just about everything that could go wrong did. In fact, that seemed to be the theme of much of the career of The Spinns. It's hard to feel entirely sympathetic, however, as the band's problems were primarily of their own doing. Drugs, alcohol, and a lack of common sense amongst some of the members created many dangerous (albeit humorous) situations.

The book also comes with photos, reviews, and features of The Spinns. It also has a good number of interesting, humorous footnotes. However,

I saw that *Self Booked* was funded through a Kickstarter campaign. While it's great to see a success, couldn't Colberg have made a higher goal than the one he had and gotten enough money to hire an editor? Next time, hit me up! I work for cheap! —Kurt Morris (Plan-It-X, PO Box 2312, Bloomington, IN 47402)

Trans-Siberian

By Bart Schaneman, 84 pgs.

This is an extremely well done travel journal that reads nearly like a novel for its seamlessness and fluidity. Schaneman can write, for sure. *Trans-Siberian* is apparently a companion-piece to a larger work, but for the most part it stands alone, covering a few weeks of Schaneman's after he gets done teaching in South Korea. What follows are brief jaunts throughout China, Mongolia, and Russia, where he befriends other travelers as well as locals. He spends a lot of time writing about the food and about the nights spent drinking with his companions. It's all incredibly well done and, like I said, reads more like a novel than anything else. The scattered dialogue is excellent and believable. There are a few infrequent moments of self-reflection, but not a whole lot regarding his own (aaaah, not that word!) privilege, as apparent as it may be to a reader.

It was an odd dichotomy: he defends the U.S. (or at least insults Europeans who would be so clichéd as to rip on the United States) and even at the end of the book, when a Russian woman who grew up in Soviet times kind of calls him out on his ability to travel and afford to eat well and all that, there's no real internal reflection going on there. It's too bad, because Schaneman is such a goddamn good writer, I'd love to hear his take on the idea of if he even thinks Americans traveling abroad is a luxury at all.

This one comes recommended on the strength of the writing. Whether he's talking about the people he meets in a Trans-Siberian railcar or taking the backseat in a Russian street race, his writing is confident and captivating. Personally, I just wanted a bit more internal dialogue. I'll be looking for work from Bart Schaneman in the future. —Keith Rosson (Punch Drunk Press, distributed by Microcosm Publishing, 112 C S. Main, Lansing, KS 66048)

What Are You Doing Here? A Black Woman's Life in Heavy Metal

By Laina Dawes 82 pgs.

This is a revealing book about fans that are not normally mentioned in heavy metal circles: the diehard black female fan. The author talks about her life experiences going to various concerts, from good to openly hostile. Other fans chime in with what they see as the problems in the scene today. Dawes sheds light on bands that may be new to a lot of people and how they deal with adversity. This is an intriguing read that will clue you in on perspectives that you may not have been aware of previously. The author urges female fans to keep rocking, but stand tall if a situation gets out of hand. A must-read, no matter what type of music you're into on your own. —Sean Kopenick (Bazillion Points, bazillionpoints.com)

Wired Up!: Glam, Proto Punk, and Bubblegum;

European Picture Sleeves 1970-1976

By Jeremy Thompson and Mary Blount

When it comes time to use a phrase more specific than "proto punk," lines sometimes blur at the seam of what is glam and what is power pop.

Some of the clothes in this book make Blowfly appear conservative. The band pictures are often embellished with stars and swooshes of color that ride the line between record art clichés and something you would seriously consider hanging on your wall. The fonts alone are worth the price of the book.

"Drugs, alcohol, and a lack of common sense created many dangerous (albeit humorous) situations."

—Kurt Morris, *Self Booked: Empty Bottles, Germs Burns and Bootneck Dreams: True Tales of The Spinns*

Wired Up! is an excellent clue to why that is. It's a beautiful volume of pictures of record sleeves released in Europe during the years leading up to the word "punk" becoming a brand. Uncommon versions of singles from bands like The New York Dolls are mixed in among so many obscurities that you would have to quit your job to hunt them all down.

And looking at the book makes you want to. It is hard not to wonder what a leather crusader like Pantherman's singles sound like. You can still find the seminal glam band Mud's material, but Zenda Jacks "Rub My Tummy" does not come up as easily. Better-known bands like Suzi Quatro and Slade put the six years the book covers in perspective nicely.

These singles were produced at a time when the art had to convey the wild side when the wild side was not for sale at the mall. Musicians were left to come up with their own concepts, costumes, and hairdos. Contained in the pages is a dense tome of young people having young fun.

The only downside is the questions raised and not answered. Children Of The Morning's single is called "Ku Klux Man." Is it a white power thing, or just an ill-conceived concept record? I may never know the answer to that. How did The Streakers come up with their album art? The answer there is a little more obvious.

It is a fun book full of obscurities you may never come across. Like looking through a stack of overpriced records, the desire to hear more is overwhelming. The book includes several interviews with unheralded glam/power pop veterans including Milk And Cookies' bassist Sal Maida and Jook's Chris Towson. The interviews are excellent companions and give you a taste of the time. It's an extensive collection of art that tells a rock'n'roll story. —Billups Allen (wiredupbook.com)



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